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Jesus in the First Gospel

JESUS IN THE FIRST GOSPEL

BY

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HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LIMITED LONDON

BS3596
.F5

Made and Printed in Great Britain for Hodder & Stoughton, Limited, by C. Tinling & Co., Ltd., Liverpool, London and Prescot.

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TO MY WIFE

Note by the Author.

It has long been my conviction that the "Gospel according to Matthew" is the loveliest as well as the most important book in the world; this volume contains an attempt to bring out some of the aesthetic beauty that a commentary in the technical sense is apt to hide. My father, Dr. Findlay, once said to me that it would be worth any man's while to devote a lifetime to the effort to restore the First Gospel to the primacy it once held in the regard of the Church, a primacy to which its position in the New Testament is an abiding witness. My friend, the Rev. J. T. Hudson, and I have carefully examined the courageous effort which Mr. H. C. Jameson has made in his "Origin of the Synoptic Gospels" to prove that the "First" is also the earliest gospel, and have, somewhat reluctantly, come to the conclusion that he has not proved his case. No direct suggestion, either as to the gospel's date or its authorship will be found in these pages, as my primary purpose has been exposition. I do not believe that Matthew, the publican, wrote the book as it stands, but am of opinion that an anthology of Old Testament quotations made by Matthew, and perhaps also a Matthean-tradition of the teaching of Jesus, underlie the gospel as we have it. The comparative absence of Aramaic idiom and the smooth and regular

Hellenistic Greek, both marked features of the writer's style, suggest a Jew of the dispersion; on the other hand the book is everywhere racy of Palestinian soil. We should infer that the writer knew the ground well, and that the constituency for which he wrote was resident in Palestine (compare 27, 9; 28, 15). The two passages referred to suggest a date after 70 A.D. It is, of course, merely for the sake of convenience that I have often called the evangelist "Matthew" when referring to him.

I have been unable to avoid some repetition of the third part of "Jesus as they saw Him"; I hope that readers will find compensation for any iteration in the more orderly plan of this book, which, unlike the other, follows the gospel straight through, and in the development or correction of lines of exposition suggested there. The purpose of the present volume is to do for the whole gospel what the "Realism of Jesus" attempted to do for the "Sermon on the Mount"; that is why the "Sermon" itself is only very summarily dealt with.

I am glad once again to acknowledge my growing debt to my teacher and inspirer, Dr. Rendel Harris; my brother, Rev. G. H. Findlay, has carefully corrected my proofs, and I owe several valuable suggestions to him. My thanks are also due to the Editor of the *Methodist Times* for permission to reprint articles which appeared originally in that paper.

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Book I

The structure of the First Gospel

A FRENCH critic, comparing the first three Gospels, has said that Mark displays the art of the engraver, Luke that of the painter, Matthew that of the architect. Certainly the First Gospel is a masterpiece of constructive genius. The body of the book is divided into five sections, each with a clearly-marked subject. These sections are parted from one another by milestones hewn from the same quarry. Each of them has written upon it the formula " When Jesus had finished . . . . " The " milestones " occur at 7, 28 ; 11, 1 ; 13, 53 ; 19, 1 ; 26, 1 ; and the subjects of the sections they contain can be recapitulated as follows :

5, 1–7, 29. Jesus the Teacher, greater than Moses.

8, 1–11, 1. Jesus the Captain-Saviour, greater than Joshua.

11, 2–13, 53. Jesus the pre-existent Wisdom and Word of God, greater than the Wisdom incarnate in Solomon.

13, 54–19, 1. Jesus the founder of the new Israel, rejected by the old.

19, 2–26, 1. Jesus the world's judge, the world's victim, and the world's redeemer.

To put the matter in another way: the five sections describe to us (1) What He taught, (2) What He did, (3) What He was, (4) The nature of His mission, (5) Its consequences. The order of the sections was suggested by the great saying reported in the last verse of the Gospel (28, 20); "*teaching* them (1) to observe all that I *commanded* you (2), and lo! *I* (3) *with* you (4) to the *consummation* of the world's history (5).

The five sections are preceded by a prologue (Chap. 1–4) which introduces Jesus to us, and lead up to an epilogue (Chap. 26–28), the climax to which the sections have, stage by stage, led us. The prologue contains seven prophetical testimonies, and so does the epilogue. With one doubtful exception, the testimonies, or quotations from the Old Testament in the prologue, come from the prophets; four of those in the epilogue from Psalms describing the passion of the suffering servant of God. It will be convenient to enumerate them here, dealing with any difficulties any of these quotations suggest, before we attempt to treat the Gospel in detail. They are:

(1) "The maiden will conceive and bear a Son, and His name will be called Immanuel (God with us)" (Isa. 7, 14).

(2) "And thou, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, art not the least among Judah's princes; for out of thee shall come One who is a Prince indeed; He shall be My people Israel's ruler" (Micah 5, 2).

(3) "I called My Son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11, 1).

(4) "A cry was heard in Rama, weeping and

grievous lamentation ; it was Rachel weeping for her children ; she would not be comforted, because they are no more " (Jer. 31, 15).

(5) " He shall be called Nazoraeus " (? Isa. 11, 1).

(6) " A voice ! in the desert it rings out ! prepare God's highroad, make the path for His feet to tread ! " (Isa. 40, 3).

(7) " Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, where the great sea-road runs to cross the fords of Jordan, Galilee where the Gentiles dwell, the people that has long been sitting in darkness has seen a great light, upon those doomed to dwell in a death-shadowed land the dawning of God's day has shone forth " (Isa. 9, 1).

In the epilogue the seven " testimonies " are as follows :

(1) " I will lay the Shepherd low, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered far and wide " (Zech. 13, 7).

(2) " My soul is very sorrowful " (Ps. 43, 5).

(3) " The Son of Man sitting on God's right hand, and coming *on* the clouds of Heaven " (Dan. 7, 13).

(4) " And they took the thirty silver coins—what a price to set upon the head of Him upon whom a price has ever been set, Him whom some of the sons of Israel priced ! and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me " (Zech. 11, 12, 13).

(5) They gave Him " wine to drink, mingled with bitter herbs " (Ps. 69, 22).

(6) " They parted My garments among them,

casting the dice" (Ps. 22, 19); with this quotation from Psalm 22 should also be counted the phrases "wagging their heads" (Ps. 22, 8) and "He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He desires Him" (Ps. 22, 9).

(7) "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani" (Ps. 22, 1).

Of the first group of testimonies, it is clear that (1) is the proof text of the Virgin Birth. The reading of the Septuagint, the standard Greek version, has been followed here, and an age-long controversy has been carried on between Christians and Jews as to the origin of the reading "virgin" in its text. The Hebrew word "almah" simply expresses sexual maturity, and might be used of a young woman who is either single or married, but in actual practice it means a maiden. Dr. Lukyn Williams, who is an accepted authority on this subject, says that, so far as usage is concerned, "almah" is *the only* word in Hebrew that is consistently employed to designate a virgin.

Whatever the intention of the prophet may have been, the Septuagint reading itself is evidence of the belief current in Alexandria in the third century B.C. that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. It is often forgotten that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is older than Christianity. Jewish slanders prove at least that there was something exceptional about the birth of Jesus, and the fact that Joseph was a law-abiding man, yet did marry Mary, in face of the command of the law (Deut. 24, 1) suggests that he must have been somehow convinced that she was not

guilty, and provides a sound basis for our belief that the story as told by Matthew is authentic. The account given in the First Gospel is the more valuable, in that the tradition which it contains obviously comes from Joseph, for it is written altogether from his point of view. It may be mentioned here that the reading of the " Lewis " Syriac version—" Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begat Jesus who was called Christ " does not exclude the Virgin Birth, for the word " begat " is used in the sense of legal as well as of actual paternity.

The second and the third of the testimonies in the prologue call for little comment. Number two gives us the title of Jesus—" Captain " or " Prince "—the key word, it will be remembered, of the second section of the Gospel (Chap. 7, 28–11, 1), while number three conveys to us another great testimony-idea. Jesus is Himself the true Israel, repeating in His own life-story the spiritual history of God's chosen people—like theirs, His infancy is spent in Egypt. The Talmud knows of the flight into Egypt, but, strangely enough, makes Jesus escape into Egypt as an adult, and charges Him with bringing back magical secrets from Egypt inscribed upon His skin ! It may be mentioned in this connexion that the doctrine that Jesus is the true Israel of God is bound up with the idea, to be unfolded later on in this Gospel, that He is God's suffering servant.

The fourth testimony is interesting as its quotation bespeaks our evangelist's feeling for the darker aspects of the coming of Jesus ; His birth is accom-

panied by the murder of the innocents, His Galilean ministry shadowed by the murder of John, His death is the culminating murder of the ages; the Gospel begins and ends with the shedding of "innocent blood." Rachel died near Bethlehem, and she stands for all the heartbroken mothers of the martyrs man has made through the centuries. Yet, as in the case of the shedding of the Lord's own innocent blood, so here; sorrow is but a prelude to deliverance, for, in the passage in Jeremiah from which the testimony is taken, the context is full of exultation: "I will turn their mourning into joy, and make them rejoice after their sorrow." But meanwhile behind the young mother there stands the shadowy figure of Rachel, the patron-saint of Bethlehem, stretching out her arms and crying for her murdered children; Mary will understand her sorrow by and by, for "through thine own heart too shall a sword pass." Jesus might escape for a time, but before the end He will become like His brethren; His mother will suffer as so many other mothers before and after her have been made to suffer.

The fifth testimony is more difficult, because the exact words "He shall be called Nazoraeus" are nowhere to be found in the text or in any version of the Old Testament. It is probable that the name Nazareth was taken as meaning "Branch-town"; in other words, that the word Nazareth was thought of as derived from "netzer," a branch. In that case, the reference is to Isaiah 11, 1, where the Septuagint gives the Greek word for "flower" as its translation, a beautiful rendering of Netzer into Greek picture-

language. Justin calls Jesus the " Flower " ; perhaps Nazareth means " flower-town." The sixth testimony is common to the three Synoptic Gospels, and need not detain us now, but the seventh is the finest of them all. In this testimony, introducing the Galilean ministry, as in that other (12, 18–21), which sums up its spirit, the fact that it was a mission to the Gentiles is emphatically brought out ; it is difficult to restrain one's impatience with critics who still charge the evangelist with a narrow nationalism.

In regard to the seven testimonies which occur in the epilogue, only one or two points need be discussed here. In number three we have " *on* the clouds of Heaven " ; Mark and Luke are nearer the text of Daniel, where we read " *with* the clouds." The change of preposition does not look important ; but, as a matter of fact, it is of the utmost significance. The Messiah may come " with the clouds," but only God can ride *on* the clouds ; real divinity is here claimed for the Son of Man. If Jesus said " *on* the clouds," no wonder the high priest rent his robe ! Number four calls for a rather fuller consideration, for it faces us with an attribution to the wrong prophet. The sentence Matthew quotes does not come from Jeremiah, as he says it does (27, 9), but from Zechariah. The nearest passage in Jeremiah is 18, 2 : " Rise up and go down to the house of the potter "— perhaps the occurrence of a " potter's house " in Jeremiah is responsible for the confusion. It is more probable, however, that the evangelist is not using the Old Testament at all, but has turned up the Judas-section in his Book of Testimonies. There, as we

can see in Bar-Salibi's Syriac version of the "Testimonies against the Jews," the quotation from Zechariah is to be found in close proximity to a similar passage, to which the name of Jeremiah is given, though it also comes from Zechariah; the names of both prophets are found in Bar-Salibi. Another prophecy with a misleading label upon it appears in the best texts of Mark 1, 2, where we read "as it is written in the prophet Isaiah"; the last part of the quotation comes from Isaiah 40, 3, it is true, but a sentence taken from Mal. 3, 1, is inserted in front of it. Mark, like Matthew, and Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, does not look up his proof-texts in the Old Testament itself at all; that was not because New Testament writers were lazy, but because very few people would possess a complete copy of the Old Testament, and the work had been done already, probably by the apostle Matthew himself. An anthology of prophecies taken as referring to Christ was available before the books of our New Testament began to be written. Any careful Bible reader will have noticed that the words of such quotations from prophecy rarely agree exactly with the passage in the prophet or psalm from which they are quoted; as a matter of fact, in many cases, they do not correspond to any known version. This difficulty also is met by the theory that the Book of Testimonies was used; the Hebrew was translated into Aramaic for the purpose of the Testimony-book, and the New Testament writers translated the Aramaic back into Greek; hence the sometimes considerable changes in the wording of the passages concerned.

Chapter II *What happened when the King was born*

(Chap. 1 and 2)

THE phrase "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham," with which this greatest of the Gospels begins, is meant to recall the formula of Gen. 2, 4 and 5, 1; the history of the universe (Gen. 2, 4) and of humanity (Gen. 5, 1) begins afresh, when Jesus the Messiah is born. He is Son of David, therefore He is the expected King of the Jews; He is Son of Abraham, and in Him is fulfilled the promise "in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"; therefore He is also the Saviour of the Gentiles. Then follows the pedigree, which is interesting specially for two reasons. In Hebrew, David has three letters, and the pedigree is made out in three divisions; the three letters, when used to denote numbers, make up a total of fourteen, and we have three divisions of fourteen generations each. The writer is evidently an Oriental through and through; numbers mean very much to him. The other feature of the pedigree is that four women, not counting Mary, are introduced into it, and two, possible three of them, are foreigners! Ruth and Rahab certainly were, and so perhaps was Bathsheba, for she was originally the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Again we observe the deliberate intention to suggest that Gentile blood had contributed to the

making of Jesus! Still more startling is the fact that three of these women were of what the world calls doubtful character. An answer to Jewish insinuations against Mary may be intended; if she had been what they thought her, the Davidic line itself was not untainted higher up; that did not interfere with the fulfilment of the promise that the Messiah should come by way of David's line, for by God's mercy, the clean can come from the unclean. Apart from this, the evangelist hastens to show, there was no ground for such suspicions in Mary's case, for Joseph was assured that she was not guilty by no less an authority than an "angel of Jehovah."

An interesting confirmation from an unexpected source of the historicity of the story of the massacre at Bethlehem comes from the second book of Macrobius' Saturnalia, in which a number of *bons mots*, ascribed, among others, to the emperor Augustus, are given us. Macrobius was not a Roman by birth, but apparently wrote his book at Rome about the end of the third century A.D. The story is told that the emperor, hearing that a massacre of children under two years old had taken place by Herod's orders in Syria, in the course of which a natural son of Herod himself was said to have perished, made a pun on the subject: "I would rather," he said, "be Herod's pig than his son." As the Greek words for "pig" and "son" are almost the same, and are actually written alike, apart from a line over the top of the word "son," in the MSS. of the period, we can see the point of the epigram at once. The grammarian is simply repeating one of the standard jokes of the time, handed

down, as such jokes are, from generation to generation. If Macrobius had read the story in Matthew's gospel, and connected the traditional joke with it, the reference would surely have been more explicit, and the evidence is strongly against his having been a Christian. It is more likely that the report of the massacre did reach Rome, and that the fact that a "King of the Jews" was somehow involved was taken to mean that the appearance of a possible claimant to the throne, that is, one of the many natural children of Herod, was the occasion of the massacre.

The historical character of the story of the coming of the magi from the East has been discounted on the ground that Tiridates, king of Parthia, who was a "wise man," did come to Rome in 66 A.D., and with other magi, did homage to Nero, as the sun-god Mithra. Harnack argues that there is no reason to think of embassies from the East to the emperor's court, but is of opinion that the presence of Chaldean astrologers in Rome, and Balaam's prophecy of the "star of Jacob" (Numbers 24, 17), might have been sufficient to produce what he calls the "legend." But, if so, why, with his fondness for testimonies, did not the evangelist quote either this text or Isaiah 60, 3, 6; 49, 12; Ps. 72, 9–15? Kepler calculated that a rare conjunction of the planets Jupiter, Saturn and Mars took place between April and December of B.C. 6; while Turner, another authority, ascribes the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn only to the May of B.C. 7. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, in the constellation "Pisces," we learn from Jewish sources, was a sign of the coming

of the Messiah. If Turner's calculation is accurate, we have a remarkable confirmation of Ramsay's argument ("Was Christ born at Bethlehem ?" p. 196) that 6 B.C. was the date of the birth of Jesus, for the fact that Herod gives instructions to kill all the male children of "two years old and under," after making careful enquiry about the exact date of the first appearance of the star from the wise men, suggests that they had been the best part of two years on the way, and this is not far from the time that elapsed between Mr. Turner's (spring of B.C. 7) and Sir W. M. Ramsay's date (autumn B.C. 6).

The gifts offered by the wise men are significant; again the proclamation of the royal birth of Jesus is shadowed by the Cross; they present gold—as to a king, incense—as to a god, myrrh—the symbol of death and burial. More important still is the fact that Jesus here receives the homage of *Gentiles;* at every point in the narrative the evangelist seems to be labouring to bring out the universal meaning of the mission of the new-born King! Already enthroned by the Gentiles, and threatened by the rulers of the Jews, God's flower finds shelter, first in heathen Egypt, then in Galilee of the Gentiles, in the "flower-town" hidden away in the hills. We shall see in the sequel that our evangelist wishes us to take very seriously his statement that, when Jesus was born, Herod "was disturbed, and *all Jerusalem with him.*" He delights to point out how the towns to which Jesus came were "shaken" at His approach (compare especially 8, 34; 21, 10).

Chapter III — *Son of God and Son of Man* (Chap. 3 to 7)

ELIJAH was expected to come again to prepare the way for the Messiah, and to wait upon Him when He came. As high priest he was also to anoint the King with sacred oil. John appears, and Jesus goes up to be baptised by him in the sacramental Jordn water. It is clear that John was no mere reviva preacher, bent upon reforming the Jewish Churc al his message was that a new Israel was to be establish :h and that, without a complete change of spirit the most privileged members of the old Church would have no place in the new. Abraham's true children may be Gentiles, who seem as unlikely candidates for admission to the Kingdom as the very stones. It is difficult for us to realise how revolutionary such teaching as this was; that Pharisees and priests alike should be told that nothing but a complete change of their way of life could put them even on the same footing as the heathen, and that all previous valuations were to go for nothing!

John's preaching is the more remarkable, in that Elijah, apart from his relation to the Messiah, was expected merely to legislate on points of legal ritual, and determine the comparative position in the Messianic Kingdom of certain families among the

chosen people. John, on the other hand, will have nothing to do either with law or temple; he is in the prophetic succession, but goes further in his repudiation of official religion than any of his predecessors.

Yet he claims to be only the echo of a voice; the Word itself was still to be spoken. He does not profess to be Elijah, though Jesus gave him that honourable title; the One "whose shoes he himself was unworthy to carry," as the meanest slave of the household carries his master's slippers when he goes out to dinner, is to be the true Elijah, anointing with the Holy Spirit, the reality of which the oil used in the older anointing was but a symbol.

It is curious that, in the Synoptic Gospels at least, John never proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, but only as the "One who should come." The reference to the baptism by fire—inward purging as opposed to the outward cleansing effected by water—reminds us of Elijah calling down fire from Heaven; it is possible that Schweitzer is right when he says that John first preached Jesus as Elijah who was to come. In the Acts of the Apostles (18, 25) we read that Apollos knew "the things concerning Jesus," but had only got as far as "the baptism of John," and that there were still Christians at Ephesus who had never heard of the actual descent of the promised Holy Spirit (19, 2). If John had clearly pointed to Jesus as the Messiah, it would be difficult to understand how there could be any disciple of John who, knowing of Jesus, could have refrained from passing

on from John to his greater Successor. But if his recognition of Jesus had been somewhat vague and halting, we can see how it came about that there were still some who clung to John. One of the purposes of the Fourth Gospel is to make it unmistakably plain that John was inferior to Jesus, that John was a voice, Jesus *the* Word; John a lamp, Jesus the Sun. The question we have been asking is bound up with another, Did John see the dove or hear the voice from Heaven? Again, the Fourth Gospel says that he did (John 1, 32) while the Synoptics are ambiguous. "He saw" (Matt. 3, 16; Mark 1, 10) is perhaps most reasonably interpreted as meaning "Jesus saw." The Baptism was of vital importance, not in the history of John, but in that of Jesus.

But why, if the baptism of John stood for the remission of sins committed, did Jesus submit to it at all? The Gospel of the Hebrews makes an interesting attempt to deal with this difficulty, acutely felt when these records were written. His mother and His brethren, this gospel tells us, proposed that they should all go together to be baptised, and He said to them, "Wherein have I sinned that I should go and be baptised by him? Except perchance this very thing that I have said is ignorance." This fragment bears the appearance of genuineness, for the suggestion of limitation to the self-knowledge of Jesus that it conveys would be avoided in an altogether artificial explanation. Matthew's answer is deeper and more subtle. John himself was surprised at our Lord's coming to him,

and thought the parts of baptiser and baptised should be reversed, but Jesus said, "Let it pass for this once; for this is in keeping with the way of life prescribed for us both." "For us both," not "for *me*"—that is the watchword with which Jesus begins His ministry; the way of obedience to His Father's will for Him was, from the beginning, the way of fellowship with us, not that of isolation. Because He felt that His highest glory was to be made in all points like His brethren, He is rewarded by the Voice from Heaven, "Thou art My Son, My beloved; in Thee My purpose finds its full expression"—I follow what I take to be the best reading of the text here. As Paul says, "He did not think that His fortune was made, when He realised His equality with God, but laid His glory by and lived a slave's life; He was altogether human . . . That is why God has given Him the name that is above every name."

One of the keynotes of the Gospel has now been decisively struck, and its echoes will still be ringing in our ears as we lay it aside. Jesus will redeem the world by fellowship; He has not come to rescue men *from* the world, so much as to save them *in* the world. Immediately after His experience by the Jordan, He disappears from public view, and among the desolate Judaean hills thinks and prays out the problem of method. The first two suggestions that come to Him are based upon the dignity of the office to which He knows Himself appointed: "If Thou art God's Son," the tempter says. Two alternatives present themselves; He might approach His work from the side of His exaltation, or He might begin it

quietly, as all other would-be saviours of men must begin. If the assumption upon which He is to proceed is to be that He is unlike everyone else, He will use His power and security for the maintenance of His own strength and fitness—the first temptation; or for the success of His propaganda—the second. To the first insinuation His answer is that, if He had been meant to provide for His wants by means not open to the rest of us, He would have been told so. Later on, He did multiply loaves and fishes, but then He was not alone; He was acting as head of a very large family. That, like all His mighty works, was a miracle of fellowship. Similarly, He did not shrink from advertisement; by and by He would be lifted up from the earth, but even on the Cross He had two men with Him, and He did not come down alive; He went through it, as any other of us would have to do. When He says, in reply to the second temptation, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," He is not rebuking the devil for His presumption, but is speaking to Himself. Other men could not take such risks and He would not. When this alternative is rejected, the other comes into view. It is as though the devil said, "Well, if you persist in going the human way, you will have to do as others do. There is only one way by which you may reach the power which you must possess, if you are to rule the world, and that is the way of compromise; you must rule them from beneath, following the tortuous path by which men reach power, if you will not rule them from above. Rapid success you must have, if you are to succeed at all, and to rapid success in this world there

are only two paths, the way of force or the way of compromise." At this stage the devil has been forced to drop his mask, and his discomfiture is immediate and complete.

The course of the ministry that follows is determined by this first encounter with other possibilities. Jesus has once and for all staked everything upon His inward certainty that in His own person God and man are united. He has exposed the fallacy which lurks behind all the heresies and paralyses so much Christian thinking even now, the idea that divine and human, spiritual and material, each exclude the other. A display of power might have done two things: it might have lifted such men and women as were ready to be saved out of the morass into which they had sunk; in that case, it would have left to their fate the many who prefer the morass with all its discomforts to the loss of liberty. Or it might have cleared the swamp for the time being, and left the people who made the first to make a second. The only way to save men is to live their life with them; it is not enough to be men's patron or father confessor; you must prove yourself their brother. This is true, even if you are the Son of God; you must be "God with us," before you can become God to us. How much more true is this for the disciple who, like his Master, would catch men! We must altogether discard the idea that we can make raids upon the world from the shelter of the Church, standing in the porch and compelling them to come in by flaming advertisements, by musical and social attractions, by a headlong "Come to Church" campaign. They

cannot be won by whirlwind onslaughts, though these may be useful in sweeping those right in, who are more than half won already; we must risk our precarious purity in their company, expose ourselves to the infection of their passions and their despair. For Him this decision involved the Cross; for us also it will be a dangerous way, but it is the only way.

It is upon the certainty that He is now, by His own choice, altogether one with us that Jesus bases His first message. "God's new age is near; prepare for a change of thought and life." The Preacher is radiant in His understanding of the men and women He has come to save. "They, these bewildered lost-looking people are My brothers and sisters; surely, surely, they can be taught to think and feel as I do, now that God has spoken to them in His Son, their Brother!" He is conscious of an inexhaustible reserve of moral power, for He is Son of God; His Father is behind Him, because He is following the path of obedience; but He has made up His mind not to hold on to this; rather, at all hazards, to hold on to His kinship with men. In His inner life He will be Son of God, but His outward life will have for its watchword, its working principle, "Son of Man." So it comes about that His divine power flows naturally through the channels of His human ministry—He did not make a parade of it, but it was there, all the more effective because it expressed itself, not in self-assertion or self-defence, but in self-giving.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the issue

between the two alternatives open to Jesus never emerged again. After Peter has confessed Him as the Son of the real God, he goes on to insinuate that an easier way is open to Him—"this cannot be to Thee," if Thou art the Son of God. Even at the Cross the tempter's voice makes itself heard again: "If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the Cross." It is important to notice that whenever Jesus is addressed as Son of God, He always accepts the title, but answers with "Son of Man." He did so with Nathanael, with Peter, with Caiaphas. In our kinship with the God revealed in Him lies the world's only hope. He will begin to build a bridge over what seemed an impassable gulf *from our end.* He did bridge it at last, but only with His own broken body. The other side was safe; at our end the chain was broken, and He will not go home, until He can be sure of taking us along with Him.

The Sermon on the Mount, which follows the call of Peter and the three others, has already been dealt with in "The Realism of Jesus." All that need be done here is to keep the thread, and for this purpose a sentence or two will suffice. The thought which runs through the great Sermon is that Jesus is Himself the ideal of human obedience to the will of the Father incarnate. To follow Him for love's sake is to enter upon the narrow and dangerous path which will make us perfect men, as He was Perfect Man. This is the main point: He calls us from all our unnatural fears and inhuman suspicions to become really human, but He comes, not merely with good counsel, but offering Himself as the link by which the broken

threads of our fellowship with God and with each other may all be gathered up again. We can never be right with God, until we feel rightly about the men and women around us; we can never be right with either God or man until we are ready to run all risks in following Him who is at once God and man.

Book II

Chapter I — *The Captain of Our Salvation*

(Chap. 8, 1–9, 38)

Our evangelist, having shewn in the Sermon that Jesus is the new and greater Moses, goes on to Joshua, the captain and saviour of his people, who led them into the promised land. That "Captain" was one of the favourite names for Jesus in very early days is shewn by Peter's speech at Solomon's porch; he calls Him "the Captain of life." We remember that this note has been sounded in one of the "testimonies" quoted in the prologue—"out of thee shall come a leader." The writer to the Hebrews follows the same line of thought to a somewhat different conclusion. But in the First Gospel the idea is systematically worked out; Mark's order is followed, with one or two not very important changes, yet by deft touches here and there all the stories and sayings contained in this section are focused upon one idea, that of the Lord's commanding *authority* to lead and to save. Joshua was the ideal leader, and his name suggests salvation; we proceed to look for the blending of these related themes—Jesus our Leader and Jesus our Saviour—in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 of our gospel, as we find them united in Acts 5, 31—"a Prince (or "Captain") and Saviour."

It will help us to see the outline if we summarise the material given us in this section to start with.

Jesus is shewn successively as having the power to command disease, to call recruits to His service, to be master of natural and supernatural forces alike. From the consideration of His power in the natural order we pass to watch the exercise of His absolute mastery in the moral and spiritual universe. He has authority not only to save men from their past sin, but with a word to change their destiny, and He claims the same rights in the life of the community. He has the right to revolutionise all the forms and customs of religion; just because He is come, they are all in suspense, if not out of date. In the story of Jairus' daughter we are carried a stage further, for all the issues of the life of mankind run out into the problem of death; here we are shewn that Jesus is master of the last mystery, upon which man's life in its physical and spiritual, its individual and social aspects, converges. Is there anything more to be said? Yes; our evangelist will not leave the subject of the authority of Jesus before he has suggested, first, the end which this amazing power serves, and then the field in which it has always attained its most absolute sway. It was so great because it was the power of compassion; and, far-reaching as the authority of Jesus is, nowhere is its supremacy more manifest and complete than in the hearts of the men who follow Him—" when Jesus *had finished* by commanding His twelve disciples."

With this summary in mind, we proceed to the detailed study of the incidents in this section (Chapters 8-10). First of all, we are given three instances

of His power to command the forces of disease. The suggestion of *military* authority is brought out most clearly in the second, but it is present in them all. He *commands* the leper and his leprosy; the fact that the leper disobeyed His orders, emphatically brought out by Mark, is quietly left on one side, and the narrative closes on the note of power—"*I will*, be thou clean." The centurion, in the second story, which comes, not from Mark, but probably from an early collection of sayings, recognises in Jesus his superior officer; "*only* speak with a *word*, and my servant shall be cured. For I, too, have my rank, I have soldiers under me." Jesus has the same easy and unquestioned authority over the forces of disease as the captain exercises over his men. The healing of Peter's mother-in-law comes third, and once more our author has a suggestion of the impressiveness of the Saviour's personality to make; the patient "rose and waited upon *Him*," for she has no eyes for anyone but Jesus. Mark has "waited upon *them*"; Matthew (R.V.) "waited upon *Him*." The three cases of healing are followed by a more general description of this powerful ministry. He casts out the demons "*with a word*" (again, the word of command), and the writer sums up this aspect of the Saviour's mighty work, as is his wont, in a singularly beautiful "testimony"—"In His own person He bore the burden of our weaknesses and carried our diseases." He is the Greatheart, using His strength to carry what is too heavy for His weaker followers to bear by themselves. Captain and suffering servant are one here; all His

power is power to save. Moreover, though His works of healing gave the impression of ease and perfect naturalness, they cost Him more than any but He knew. It is worth while for us to notice also one of the keywords of the section at this point. It is *follow*; "large crowds," we read at the beginning, "*followed Him.*"

After the three instances of power to command disease come three examples of His commanding authority over men. In the first, Jesus claims the right to call a would-be follower to a life of future hardship; in the second He bids him cut himself adrift from all the ties that bind him to the past. This passage has no parallel in Mark's Gospel, and in Luke we read "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but *go* thou and preach the Kingdom of God"; in Matthew, "*Follow Me*, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." "Come" and "go" would probably be the same word in the original, but Matthew uses "come," because *coming* to Jesus has a special meaning for him, as we shall see later on. Then we read "and when He had entered into the boat, His disciples *followed Him*"; this for Mark's much less dignified "they took Him as He was in the boat." Whether the first two recruits passed the test or not, He never lacked those who would *follow* without question.

The storm on the lake subsides when the Captain wakes and takes command; again, the *word* is enough. The disciples cry, "Lord, save, we are perishing"; the word "save" is found here in Matthew only, for Mark has "Carest Thou not that

we perish ? " and Luke has, " Master, Master, we perish." Once again, the idea of military rank is hinted at, for instead of " Who is this ? " (Mark) we have a phrase which may be translated " What is His rank ?" The boatmen do not merely rouse Him, but " approach " and rouse Him ; their deference is made at every point unmistakable. The storm is no mere " squall," as in Mark, but an " earthquake " ; the other earthquakes in this Gospel come when Jesus falls asleep on the Cross and when He wakes on Easter morning, while at His birth Herod and all Jerusalem are " shaken." There may be a suspicion of exaggeration here ; there can be no question of the evangelist's sense of the greatness of the earth-shaking personality of Jesus.

In the next story, that of the Gerasene demoniacs—there are two of them in Matthew—a very important feature is that they are called " daemones " in this case only in the whole of the New Testament, not " daemonia " as everywhere else ; Matthew's word covers supernatural forces in general. Evidently he wishes us to see in this signal manifestation of the power of Jesus not merely one instance of exorcism out of many ; His victory is a symbol of authority over all forces of evil of whatever rank. But more characteristic still of our evangelist's careful reverence are the words which follow the story of the cure ; " the whole town came out to meet Jesus." He will not say, with Mark, " came to Jesus," when a hostile coming such as this is in question ; the phrase " come to Jesus " has a very sacred meaning to him, and he will not degrade it.

Yet he does wish to suggest that whole towns were moved when He came their way, as Jerusalem when He was born and, again, when He entered the city in triumph.

The Gerasenes, when they saw Him—Matthew alone is responsible for this hint that to *see* Him, for those who would not follow this Saviour-Captain, was a terrible thing—beseech Him to leave their neighbourhood, So He goes back to *His own* town, not Nazareth, as the phrase would have led us to suppose, but Capernaum, the town which His mighty works wrought there had given Him the right to call *His own.* There he exerts a yet greater power, a power which, by universal consent, could be wielded by none but God Himself, authority not merely to heal men's bodies of natural disease or their minds of the tyranny of supernatural powers of evil, but to forgive their sins. Here, as we have already noticed in our summary of the contents of the section taken as a whole, we pass definitely from power in the realm of phenomena, whether natural or supposedly supernatural, to that of moral and spiritual reality. The sequence—in which the idea of the authority of Jesus is developed—suggests that the "demons" belong rather to the physical than the moral order; perhaps they are thought of as on the border-line between the two. Matthew, that is to say, like his Master, classes the demons rather with the winds and waves and with diseases, than with moral evil. A word or a touch is all that is needed to quiet the storm or dispel disease, whether of the mind or body; the next story—that of the paralysed man—hints that the

co-operation of faith on the part of the patient or his friends was necessary, when it was a question of forgiving sins. It should be noticed that Jesus does not deny the doctrine that "none but God can forgive sins," yet he asserts that He, as Son of Man, can do so "upon the earth"; the inference is clear that He claims at least divine prerogatives. The paralysed man instantly obeys the great commanding word, but what impresses the crowd most is that such manifest "authority" confers fresh dignity upon human nature. The life of man upon the earth is henceforth invested with a new grandeur for all who had seen such a deed done by a man.

Moreover—to pass from the individual to the community—His coming holds in suspense all human judgments and conventions. Matthew, the representative of a class in the pay of a hated foreign government, is called, and invites his fellow-publicans to his house—to meet Jesus. There he outrages the susceptibilities of the law-abiding by a lavish display of good cheer, very tantalising to virtuously hungry people on a fast day. This exhibition of hilarity was thought to be in bad taste for another reason. There was a second company of disciples pacing the streets that day, whose leader was in prison, and it was not seemly—so the whispers of the critics insinuated—to parade the difference between those who had their Teacher with them and those who had not. Jesus makes no apology, but declares that the very fact of His presence discharges His followers from traditional obligations. He is the Bridegroom; other considerations do not count

beside the fact that the world's Desire has come to claim His own. It is not that He has come to destroy the old religion; such scruples as those of the Pharisees have their place, but those whose needs an older faith had met, must live and let live, for "both are" to be "kept together." He has come to cater for men and women who had no place in the old Church; something quite new must be found for them—their turn will come for fasting later on, but He will not shadow the joy of a new-found hope by cautions or restraints. Those who love the quiet historical rituals of devotion have always found it hard to appreciate the free and easy types of "brotherhood" and mission worship; Jesus makes room for both to live in His Church side by side, but warns us that they will not mix. Our perennial difficulty is that of appreciating and making the best of one type without casting aspersions upon the other, and such epithets as "frigid" and "irreverent" are exchanged very freely, with results disastrous to the true unity of the Church. We may think, if we will, that Jesus Himself preferred the quieter forms of religion; perhaps the truth rather is that He alone of all of us was true Radical and Conservative in one, and could without revulsion share the unrestrained and, as we also might have thought, had we been there, the somewhat coarse and exuberant emotionalism of these vulgar profiteers—for that was what many of these publicans were. For the disciples of John, Jesus has a word alive with sympathetic understanding of their mood. They cannot be expected yet to share the joy of His own followers;

He knows how the sight of happy faces must bring back to them their own loss. He will not ask them to His table just yet; by and by they will come of their own accord. It is no accident that the first of the "come to Jesus" passages is found here—the publicans *came* (the word *came* is found in Matthew only)—and the next but one when these same disciples of John, their master being by now not merely imprisoned, but dead, "*came and* told Jesus" (14, 12). In a little while, they will find shelter in the company of the same Jesus, whose conduct had not long before seemed so unsympathetic. The broken fragments of the older fellowship are to find a home at last in the new, for "both are kept together."

In the story of Jairus' daughter, we are carried a stage further, for there is a striking, though not, perhaps, very serious, divergence from the account of this incident given by Mark and reproduced by Luke. According to Matthew, the little girl is already thought to be dead when the message comes to Jesus; in the story as told by the other evangelists, news is brought that she has died, while He is still on the way to the house. Whether the words of Jesus as reported in all three of the gospels—"the little girl is not dead, but is sleeping"—are to be taken literally or not, the impression our author wishes to convey is plain. Death retires before the approach of this Captain of life. If our evangelist is using Mark, he has not substantially altered, but only abbreviated the story. Matthew's chief interest in the incident of the woman with the

hemorrhage, inset into that of Jairus' daughter, is in the power of Jesus, that of Mark and Luke in the courage of the woman. The narrative of the two blind men which follows again illustrates the Lord's mastery—"Do you believe that I can do this?" His power is so obvious that already His enemies are driven to hint—the innuendo is developed later on—that it has a sinister origin.

To this suggestion, now tentatively made, Jesus does not here reply, but the evangelist answers for Him. He was so strong because He was so pitiful; not merely every actual disease, but every form of invalidism, was the subject of His anxious concern. When He saw a crowd of ordinary people, the very sight of their aimless and dispirited restlessness made Him sorry, and He could not keep away from them. Perhaps we cannot better Moffatt's rendering of Matthew's two expressive words—"they were harassed and dejected." "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bare and carried them all the days of old."

FAR-REACHING as the authority of Jesus is, nowhere is His supremacy more manifest and complete than in the hearts of the men who love and follow Him. He finishes, consummates, the exhibition of His power by "commanding His twelve disciples." Dr. Deissmann here offers us a valuable suggestion. The consciousness of Jesus is not simply that of mission; Matt. 10, 16 shews Him as the Sender, "See, I send you out." The prophet is conscious of being sent; the one who can send and equip others with His own powers is something greater than a prophet. His apostles are His plenipotentiaries; as He preaches, teaches, heals, so they; He equips them with His own enabling pity to deal with every kind of disease and human malaise. The very name disciple has from henceforward an enhanced meaning. His disciples, His slaves, they are to seek out in every town and village where they go, one who is *worthy* of the honour of entertaining them. He who entertains the slaves entertains the Master, and he who entertains the Master receives into his home the God who sent Him, as He sent them. Anyone who welcomes a prophet into his house because he is God's prophet, shall receive a reward such as only an Elijah or Elisha can give (1 Kings 17, 23; 2 Kings 4, 32). Indeed

to give hospitality to any good man ensures the reward that any good man's company in itself involves; but the most trifling act of kindness—a mere refreshing drink—given to one of *them*, not because they are prophets in their own right or specially good men, but just because they are His—shall be as nobly recompensed.

But the greatness of their commission will not be proved only or chiefly in the welcome they are to receive from private people; they will soon incur the suspicion of officials, and the ill-treatment they are to endure at the hands of local tribunals, Roman governors, and native kings, they must regard as their greatest honour. We may paraphrase this striking passage as follows: "The disciple cannot expect to escape what his Teacher has to suffer, the slave must go through it with his Owner. The disciple will count himself happy to be in it with his Teacher, the slave to share his Master's lot. If they have nicknamed the Master of the house Beelzeboul, what name will be bad enough to call His domestics by? You need not be afraid of them; there is nothing so well covered up that it will not be disclosed, no secret that will not by and by become public property. Your mission is boldly to declare the truth, to publish in the light of day what I am telling you in the dark; what I have whispered in your ears you are to proclaim on the house-tops. Do not let yourselves be afraid of those who are out to kill the body, but can never suppress *you*; rather be afraid of that dark power which can destroy you, soul and body too, in a hell of waste and shame. For the rest,

you are quite safe; not a sparrow, though sparrows are sold at two a farthing in the market, falls on the market-place floor without your Father knowing it, and, as for you, the very hairs on your head are all numbered and known! You need not fear, then; you are far more precious in His sight than sparrows! And you will be nobly rewarded; stand by Me in all men's sight, and I will stand by you before God's throne; disown Me before men, and I will disown you before God's throne. Such loyalty will not be easy; the issue of My coming will be not peace, but war to the knife. Because I have come, as Scripture says, 'The son shall be estranged from the father, the daughter from her mother, the married woman from her mother-in-law; a man's bitterest foes will be the members of his own household.' In face of such conditions, the man who loves father or mother better than he loves Me, is not *worthy* of Me; the man who loves son or daughter better than he loves Me, is not *worthy* of Me; the man who does not *fall in behind Me*, carrying his cross, is not worthy of Me. He who has discovered how to make the best of himself, shall waste himself, while he who forgets all about himself in his love for Me, shall discover his own true self."

It will be seen that we pass from one thrice-repeated "worthy" to another. Jesus dwells first on the honour that the coming of His messengers brings to any town, village or house, that is privileged to receive them. What was true of Him, is to be true of them; whole towns are to be shaken by their coming, and judged by the way they treat them. But

their greatness is to be shewn not in their high prerogative, but in their self-forgetting devotion to their Master. The source of His power was His passion of pity for us; the source of *their* power is to be their passion of love for Him; they were "men of whom the world was not worthy," but they are not to think of that; all their ambition must be to be worthy of Jesus. Self-denial is not by any means always conscious self-sacrifice, much less self-despising—though both of these have their time and season in the life of the Christian; it is more often self-forgetting. It is not so much that the disciple deliberately pushes his own interest on one side; it is that he is so much in love that it never occurs to him to think of his own interests at all. We shall try to put this saying about finding and losing into its place in Matthew's harmony later; like "come to Jesus," it sounds a note which runs all the way through the gospel; with every fresh repetition, a new beauty in the idea it calls up can be seen, as we come upon it from a new angle.

There are one or two difficulties raised by this chapter, which I have kept to the end. One is the meaning of the last part of v. 5 and v. 6, taken along with v. 23. The whole question of the so-called parochial strain in the First Gospel can best be dealt with when we come to the interpretation of the story of the Syro-Phoenician, or, as she is called in Matthew, the Canaanite, woman. It will be enough to say at this point that the fact that the twelve are, for the time being, restricted to a purely Jewish ministry does not mean that the evangelist saw no

further; Matthew 28, 19 suggests the opposite in so many words. Nor is it necessary, so it seems to the present writer, to look for a Judaistic and a universalistic source to account for a contradiction which is merely superficial. If the wider mission of the seventy, recorded only by Luke, is historical—I see no reason why it should not be—it was carried out obviously by a more miscellaneous company, among whom there may very well have been men of Samaritan or even Gentile origin. The twelve have a more restricted field for which they are specially qualified, as they are not yet for any other—"the sheep lost from the house of Israel"—the "harassed and dejected" crowd of their own countrymen; of the Lord's sudden throb of pity for their leaderless condition we have read just before. There are too many of them for Him to reach them all in person, so He proceeds to equip His disciples with a measure of His own pity and His own power to evangelise the men and women He cannot visit. As he preached the Kingdom, healed the leper, cared for the weakly, raised the dead, cured the mentally diseased, so shall they; as He gave Himself freely, so must they. As He is welcomed and loved, hated and chased from town to town, so shall they be; they must not fear those who can only kill the body, any more than He feared that fox Herod; but they are not to court martyrdom, any more than He would face the Cross until the hour His Father had ordained had come.

Verse 23 presents us with a rather more complicated problem, because it seems to suggest a limitation of the ministry of the twelve to Israel which was to last

to the Second Coming. There are obvious ways of escape from this conclusion, even though we do not accept the ingenious suggestion of Mr. Hart that this saying really belongs to the mission of the Seventy, and that, according to Luke 10, 1, Jesus is to follow hard on the heels of His emissaries; in that case "you shall not have gone through the towns of Israel until the Son of Man be come" would simply mean "till I have caught you up." This is too clever to be convincing. Another explanation suggested is to the effect that the fall of Jerusalem is referred to as a coming of the Son of Man. Upon the whole, it is best to class this passage with Mark 9, 1 as one of those which testify to the fact that at this stage in His ministry at least, Jesus looked forward to a speedy Second Coming; it has all the appearance of a genuine saying, though it is found only here, and it is certainly true that it has been fulfilled; we have not gone through the cities of Israel yet. In face of the great predominance of the universalistic strain in this gospel, it is no special pleading to argue that the meaning of the instruction here is that the twelve are not to feel that their sphere is restricted; the great crowd of their own countrymen offered them more opportunity than they would have time and ability to grasp. Even in this passage the universal note is by no means absent—"a witness to them and the *Gentiles*" certainly implies that a larger constituency is not out of sight. A similar situation is reported of the Buddha; but, whereas Jesus counsels flight from persecution, the Buddha exhorts to patient endurance. Jesus is always the

realist; not virtue for the sake of virtue is His aim, but efficiency in service.

The other point of exposition which should be dealt with here comes in v. 16. Here we have sheep, wolves, snakes and doves, all in one verse. In the so-called Second Epistle of Clement we have another version of this saying—"Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves." Peter answered and says to Him: "What then if the wolves tear the lambs?" Jesus said to Peter: "Let not the lambs fear the wolves after they are dead." Then follows a modification of the saying about not fearing those who can only kill the body (v. 28). Evidently what is thought of in "Second Clement" is deliverance from fear by death; in Matthew the thought is rather that of protection in this life. In regard to the very interesting saying about snakes and doves, the reading "very generous" or "very affectionate" is suggestive, but, as it is not repeated on the Latin side of Codex Bezae, we cannot lay great stress upon it; it is probably an interpretation of the meaning of the Greek word in our text, which should be translated not "harmless," but "guileless," "simple." The snake is the symbol of the devil—"generation of vipers" means "children of the devil"—and the dove of God's Spirit; so that we get this exhilarating paradox—"you are to be as clever as the devil and as innocent as God's Spirit"; the shrewdness and the simplicity of true love could not be more piquantly described. It only remains to be said that I am more than ever convinced that when, in the saying referred to above (v. 28), Jesus warned

us whom we are to fear, He did not mean God. "Fear God" is an apostolic injunction, but it is nowhere found in the teaching of Jesus. It is Satan who can "destroy both soul and body in hell," and it is Satan who is to be feared. It would lead us too far from our text to discuss the question how Jesus reconciled this seeming dualism with belief in God's omnipotence; all that I am concerned to point out here is that the fact of the power of Satan and his kingdom of fear set over against God's Kingdom of love is everywhere assumed in the teaching of Jesus.

So we arrive at the end of our second section; we have watched the manifestation of this Saviour-Captain rising from peak to peak of triumphant achievement, and have been carried on to the culminating thought that He is greatest of all because He can transmit His authority to and reproduce His power in the men who love and follow Him. They become healers and saviours, as He is; they are to earn love and hatred as He did; their passion of devotion to His service is to be to them what His passion of pity for us was to Him; it is to deliver them from fear and self-conscious scheming, to make them, like Him, at the same time transparently simple and uncannily wise. Yet all this is to come from no virtue of their own; the powers they are to exercise will only be theirs, so long as love for Him is the passion of their lives. This is the true apostolic succession, then as now; by virtue of no prerogative or official position, only by their self-forgetting love of Jesus are men qualified for the sacramental service of the Church and the world. Once we begin to be

conscious of our ministerial dignities, we lose them; ordination by the laying on of hands may testify to the fact that we have been thought worthy of a place in the Church's ministry; neither official recognition nor any kind of practical success can keep us there, only a love for the person of our Lord greater than all our other loves.

Book III

"*Who then is this?*"

In passing to the third, and from some points of view most important section of our gospel, we must keep in mind the method of our research. We have learnt to look for the topic which is to be the chief subject of the section we are to consider not at its beginning, but on or somewhere near the milestone which marks its close. We remember that this was so with the Captain-Saviour section; we look on the milestone (11, 1) which marks its close and find the words "When Jesus had finished *commanding* His twelve disciples"—the topic of that section being "Jesus: Commander-in-Chief." The next milestone comes at 13, 53, and the legend engraved upon it runs: "When Jesus had finished these *parables*." This gives us a hint; this is to be a parable-section. We look a little further back, and find in v. 35 the appropriate testimony: "I will open My mouth in *parables*, I will pour forth (or perhaps, better to express the blunt word used, 'blurt out') things kept hidden from the foundation (of the world)." Passing the milestone again, we come in v. 54 to "Where does this man get this *wisdom* and these powers from?" This gives us the necessary clue. Parables are associated with Solomon, and Solomon with

"Wisdom"; we are not surprised to find in this section the words "The great Southern Queen came from the other end of the world to hear the *wisdom of Solomon*, and see! a greater than Solomon is here!" In the Book of the "Wisdom of Solomon" to which we now turn, we make the surprising discovery that the Wisdom of God is thought of as incarnate in King Solomon, for in Chapter 6, 22, we read "But what wisdom is, and how she came into being" (the words "to me" in the English version are not in the Greek) "I will declare," and two verses later Solomon goes on to describe his own birth: "I myself am mortal, like to all" (7, 1). Ought we not to translate the passage about the Queen of Sheba—"to hear Wisdom incarnate in Solomon, and look! a greater Wisdom than Solomon's is here!"

We begin the section, it will be further noticed, with "the works of the Messiah," that is, with a summary of the contents of the preceding three chapters, which we have just examined in detail; directly after its close we notice the association of "Wisdom" with "*powers*." "Works" are achievements, seen from the point of view of their results; "powers" are achievements, seen in the light of the power they manifest. We observe, too, that "Wisdom" and "works" are brought together quite early in the section we are now studying: "Wisdom is vindicated by all her works," where Luke has "children." The underlying word would be the same in Aramaic; Matthew's choice is suggested by his theme.

It will be convenient if, as in the last section, we survey the ground to be covered before we enter into details. First of all, in the Lord's answer to John the Baptist's doubts, it is shewn that the achievements which we have been watching prove at least that Jesus is no mere prophet; John was the last and greatest product of the old dispensation; with Jesus a new revelation begins. These "powers" manifested so signally in the towns of Galilee cannot be accounted for as a mere culmination of what has gone before; a new age is breaking in, a new unearthly Personality is at work. The chapter closes with a Wisdom-claim and a Wisdom-call—I hope to make the meaning of these phrases clear in the sequel. In the 12th Chapter an alternative theory of the origin of this admitted power is discussed and dismissed. Granted that the power exercised by Jesus is unearthly, superhuman, it may be either from beneath or from above. The absurdity of the charge by the scribes is exposed, and the motives of the men who made it analysed. In the rest of the chapter we see that this power cannot be suppressed; neither the open attacks of His enemies, nor the well-meant attempts of His people at home can divert Him from His course. The only possible alternative explanation having been dealt with, in the rest of the section the secret is unfolded in parables, because the mystery of the Kingdom is of such a nature that it cannot be revealed to "baby-minds," like those of the disciples, except in figure. The mystery about the Kingdom is that He Himself is the Kingdom, that He is the "Wisdom" and "Word"

of God, with the Father before the world's foundation, Himself "the Father's pleasure," and His "the sons of men." This mystery and its meaning is expounded in a series of eight parables, of which four are introductory, and concern the method of the new power's working, and four (or three, for the parable of the drag-net seems to belong really to the first group) have to do with its nature and origin. In the next chapter we begin a detailed exposition of the section.

WE may take it, I think, that our author wishes us to understand that the twelve are away on their missionary tour during the time covered by Chapter 11; they have rejoined Him before the beginning of Chapter 12. It is characteristic of our evangelist that he shews no particular interest in what happened to them on their journey, concentrated as he is upon the person of Jesus; even when, in Chapter 14, he follows Mark in telling the story of John the Baptist's death, he does not end the paragraph without bringing you back to Jesus—"they came and told Jesus."

Mr. G. S. Lee in his "Shadow Christ"—now obtainable at a greatly enhanced price—is right, I think, in suggesting that it was the "disastrous" tenderness of Jesus for publicans and sinners, which made John wonder if, after all, he had not been mistaken in acclaiming Him as "the One who should come." Jesus appeals in answer to the things we have watched Him doing. John had preached Him as a great destructive force, who would burn such chaff as the publicans with quenchless fire; the power of Jesus was creative, and therefore greater. If we omit "lame men walk," as some important MSS. do, we are left with Matthew's usual five clauses.

Then follows the encomium on John ; he is more than a prophet, for he is God's messenger, whose coming was foretold by the last of the prophets (Malachi). The testimony quoted here is common to Matthew and Mark, but, whereas Mark blends Malachi and Isaiah and calls it all Isaiah, Matthew's version is Malachi with a suggestion of Exodus 23, 20. Our inference is that all three—Malachi, Isaiah and Exodus—were quoted, one after the other, in the Testimony-book, but Isaiah was the only name mentioned. The next verses are difficult : their main purport seems to be that John was the finest product of the old order ; but the least influential member of the company made great by their devotion to Jesus is greater than John. In the short time since John ceased, and Jesus began, to preach, the new age has been coming in by leaps and bounds. John was the herald of an age in which new forces are violently coming to birth. The disciples of Jesus Himself were revolutionaries ; now He has come and settled down with them, He will teach them His gentleness. But neither the violence of John nor the gentleness of Jesus were to the taste of the times ; the men of that generation were like spoilt children, who wanted funerals when the game was weddings, and weddings when funerals were the order of the day. John was too forbidding, and they called him a mad fanatic ; Jesus too easy, and they said, " You can tell what He is by the company He keeps ; He is hobnobbing with the lowest of the low." But each type, the puritan preacher and the Friend of sinners, has its place in God's order, the one to prepare

the way for the other. Force, even moral force, like John's, can never finish anything; but it clears the tangle and breaks a way into the consciences of men.

But what of the public of those Galilean towns who had heard and seen both John and Jesus, and were unmoved by either? Here we have a new development of the teaching, which should be noticed when it first appears, because it becomes increasingly important as the gospel moves on to its tremendous close. It will be remembered that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is appealing to individual men and women; social and national relationships are only considered in their reactions upon the state of His hearers' souls. But now we hear of an appeal to towns *as towns*. The scope of this appeal is widened as the Gospel proceeds; we pass from the towns of the Galilean lake-side to the nation assembled at Jerusalem, and from the nation to all the nations, who, in the last and greatest of the parables, are summoned before the throne of the Uncrowned King of history, and upon whom, *as nations*, judgment is passed. The Gospel recognises to the full that villages, cities and nations, have a life of their own, a life not merely identical with the sum of the lives of the individuals of whom they are composed. In regard to some of the most terrible words of Jesus, it is often forgotten that, because doom is pronounced upon a community, it does not follow that the men and women who make up that community are doomed; though Capernaum goes down to Gehenna, and though the nations who have neglected their

poor are doomed to age-long punishment, the same words cannot be hastily taken as referring to any individual man or group of men.

With this proviso, I proceed to paraphrase the passage in which the doom of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin as organised communities is pronounced. At this point He began for the first time to reproach the towns in which most of His great works of power had been wrought, because they had not come to a better mind: "Alas for you, Chorazin, and for you, Bethsaida;" He said, "if the works of power had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they would long ago have repented of their sin in dust and ashes. There will be more hope for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you! And, as for you, Capernaum, do you think your fame shall soar heaven-high? You shall die and leave no trace behind!" These busy and prosperous towns lived on the oppression of the peasant-people, whose condition had already roused the compassion of Jesus. That they, seeing what they had seen, had lived on as though such a one as He had never come their way, was their doom, and the doom pronounced then has been terribly fulfilled. It is not true that His only concern was to save and reform individuals; His appeal to the individual and to the community went together. While social and industrial conditions are what they are very many men and women cannot be expected to understand any spiritual message; it is not enough to say that we must make everybody Christian before we can hope

for lasting social betterment. We must work from both sides, clearing away abuses, keeping the corporate conscience awake, if only to make it more possible for men and women to become Christian. We shall see more clearly what Jesus demanded of the communities to which He came later on; meanwhile, it is enough to notice that He did expect Capernaum and Chorazin to be different when He had lived there for some time, and this long before He had had time to appeal even to a fraction of the inhabitants of those towns.

It was not only in the prophets and the Book of Deuteronomy that Jesus found His spiritual home; He quoted much more frequently than is usually realised from the Books of Wisdom. We turn, for instance, to the "Wisdom" of another Jesus, the son—or rather grandson—of Sirach. Ben Sira, the name by which he is known in Jewish literature, was a lecturer in Jerusalem about 200 B.C.; on the basis of his grandfather's teaching, the grandson composed in Egypt the book which we possess in the "Apocrypha" under the title of Ecclesiasticus, or book for reading in church. It is a thousand pities that we do not read it in Church; apart from its various excellences, sufficient reason for its inclusion in the lectionary can be found in its constant use by Jesus; in face of such sanction, we need not be afraid of a Pharisaic ban on the ground of heterodoxy. In the author's preface we come upon these words, uttered in the name of "Wisdom": "Draw near unto me, ye unlearned, and lodge in the house of instruction . . . . put your neck under her (Wisdom's) yoke, and let your soul receive instruction; she is hard at hand to find. Behold with your eyes how I laboured but a

little, and found for myself much rest." And again: "Come unto her ("Wisdom" once more) with all your soul . . . . for at the last you shall find her rest," and in another place: "Come unto me, all ye that desire me . . . . they that eat me shall still be hungry, and they that drink me shall still be thirsty." These are only a few of many references which might be quoted as echoed in the sayings of the greater Jesus.

We read again the stupendous claim with which Jesus prefaces His call to the weary peasant-people of Galilee: "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these mysteries from men of wise and quick perception, and disclose them to baby minds. Yes, Father, that was Thy settled purpose. All secrets have been entrusted to Me by My Father, nor does anyone recognise the Son for what He is but the Father, and, as for the Father, no one can see where His hand is at work but the Son, unless it be the man to whom the Son sees fit to disclose His secret knowledge. That is why you should come to Me, you over-burdened working people, all of you; it will rest you to be with Me. Make My yoke of obedience yours too, and learn from My example how to bear it; don't you see how easy to get on with I am, how ready to make allowances? You, too, shall discover for yourselves the secret of an inward rest."

In the first part of this passage we have the witness of the Third Gospel as well as that of the First. Nowhere do the two great gospels, more

often than not bewilderingly divergent in the detail of the record of the teaching of Jesus which they have in common, keep step more exactly. Substantially the same claim had already been made for "Wisdom," in the book of the "Wisdom of Solomon," where it is said in her praise, "She is initiated into the knowledge of God" (8, 4). Her appeal is to the simple (Proverbs 8, 5); she kills her beasts, mingles her wine, furnishes her table, sends forth her maidens, and cries "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither" (Proverbs 9, 1—4). Like her, the King is described in Matt. 22, 1—10, as sending His slaves out to call "bad and good" to the wedding, saying "My fatlings are killed, and all is ready." In the section we are studying the "Kingdom of Heaven," that is, Jesus Himself, is compared with "hid treasure"; in another classic Wisdom passage, found in the 28th Chapter of Job. we read, "Where shall Wisdom be found? . . . , Yea, the price of Wisdom is above rubies . . . . seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all living." She fills her disciples' treasuries (Proverbs 8, 21); in the gospel "the scribe who has become a disciple to the Kingdom of Heaven" (that is, "to Jesus") can bring "out of his treasure things new and old." "Men rest under her branches," for she is like "a great tree" (Sirach 14, 26); compare the parable of the mustard seed.

In Luke 11, 49 we read: "Therefore *the wisdom of God* saith 'I will send among them prophets and apostles'"; in Matthew (23, 24): "Therefore, *behold I* am sending"—Jesus is speaking—"to you prophets

and wise men and scribes," without the words "the wisdom of God saith." It is difficult to understand why Luke should have inserted the words " the wisdom of God saith " unless they occurred in his source, this must mean that they had already been recognised as quoted from some Wisdom-book now lost. The first evangelist assumes, without explanation, that Jesus Himself is the Wisdom " of God." Harnack argues that the quotation from the Wisdom-book goes on to " Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you " at the end of the chapter ; in that case Wisdom is the hen that calls to her brood " Come unto me." How suggestive, too, is a passage found in the Hebrew fragments of the book of Sirach lately discovered, when read in the light of the walk to Emmaus : " But I (Wisdom) will walk with him in disguise . . . . until his heart can trust me . . . . then will I lead him on again, and reveal to him my secrets." In that passage of Luke the Western text reads : " Was there not a veil upon our hearts, while He walked with us in the way ? " and in the appendix to Mark (16, 12) " He was made manifest in disguise."

There are at least two inferences of great importance to be drawn from this line of exposition. In the first place, if it can be established that Jesus identified Himself with the " Wisdom of God " as described in the 8th Chapter of the book of Proverbs and elsewhere, He must necessarily have taken into account the fact that " Wisdom " is depicted there as " Master-Workman " in the creation of the universe. According to all our and His authorities, Wisdom

was with God before all worlds, "sporting evermore before Him." The attempt to minimise the claim that Jesus made for Himself is, indeed, breaking down all along the line; so closely interwoven with the earliest-attested and least-disputed sayings are these extraordinary claims, that we are being driven back afresh upon the mystery of the inner life of Jesus. What were His memories of another life with His Father? Surely there must have been some instinctive sense of difference from all others, to make Him find in the 8th of Proverbs its explanation. It should be observed that our argument is all the stronger, in so far as it is not a claim put into so many words, but one taken for granted rather than argued; His pre-existence with the Father is the premise from which His thought about Himself begins rather than its goal. Moreover, the claim is not based upon comments of the evangelist; it is implied everywhere in the words of Jesus—that is, unless we are to ascribe "Come unto Me" and all its context to the author of the Gospel rather than Jesus, as well as the greater part of the 12th and 13th Chapters! No special foresight is needed to prophesy that the next great battle in theology will centre round His self-consciousness. Champions on both sides will do well to remember that the ground is sacred and demean themselves accordingly.

The other inference—this time one largely concerned with Gospel-criticism—is to the effect that we are beginning to find the Fourth Gospel in the First. If the point of view suggested here wins acceptance,

it will follow that the doctrine of the Prologue of John's Gospel does not come from Philo at all, but straight out of the self-consciousness of Jesus—a consummation devoutly to be wished for! The New Testament is rapidly becoming one; here is the bridge between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, for the "Wisdom" of God and the "Word" of God mean the same thing. Obviously, if this is so, without changing the meaning, we might write in the first verse of John's gospel, "In the beginning was Wisdom, and Wisdom was with God," and we should be reproducing the teaching we have discovered already in the First Gospel. Whether "and the Word was God" does or does not involve a fresh step, is a question on which those who are interested in this idea should concentrate. But it is at least clear that we have already arrived at a clue to the nature of Christ's person very nearly allied to Paul's doctrine of the Heavenly Man. It cannot be too strongly said that, though Paul or John may take a step further in explanation, it is only a step further upon a track already laid down in the Synoptic gospels, but most clearly in the First, and laid down, unless their testimony is to be rejected altogether, by Jesus Himself; it is never a new beginning. The foregoing argument is not meant to involve a denial that Greek philosophy has had anything to do with either the Logos or with the Wisdom idea. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Wisdom doctrine was not a native Jewish product and, indeed, never took root firmly in Jewish soil; it has undoubtedly come from the Stoic philosophy

of Greece into the Old Testament. That only means that Greek philosophy as well as Old Testament prophecy has had a share, not in the building up of the self-consciousness of Jesus, for that was native to Him, but in its explanation. The point is that later Christian thought about Him does not owe this master-thought to alien influences directly, but to Him for whose sake those influences first came into being, and who made them no longer alien. He, not Paul or John, was the creative mind; the processes, the unfolding of which we watch in the history of the Church, processes by which field after field of human knowledge and thought is appropriated to the explanation of the Person of Christ, had already taken place in His own inner consciousness. He was not theorising for speculation's sake, any more than was the Apostolic Church; He was accounting for facts, and the facts were those of His own experience. Two of these facts were the sense of oneness with God, and an equally unique passion of love, not for some men, but for every man. How much a part of His being His sense of intimacy with God was, we see when we realise that He died when He lost it for a moment; how overpowering His love for men everything that He ever did or suffered bears witness. We are moving back to the standpoint of the old orthodoxy, but we approach it from a different angle. They said "When the prophets wrote as they did in the Old Testament, they consciously foretold the story of the Christ"; we say, "When Jesus read the Old Testament, He saw Himself there." The Old Testament will always keep its

place in the Christian Bible, whatever our estimate of its intrinsic and spiritual value may be, because without it we should never be able to read the secret of Jesus.

If the description of the life lived by the Galilean peasant-people of our Lord's time given in "The Realism of Jesus" (p. 164) is true, it will be obvious that such a mysterious doctrine as the one outlined in the last chapter would be altogether above their heads; yet Jesus has just said that "these things" have been revealed "to baby-minds." We must take it, I think, that the "baby-minds" are His disciples, and the "men of wise and quick perception" are the scribes, who had been so long the leaders in the older Church. The "heavy laden" to whom Jesus gave this invitation to companionship should be distinguished both from the disciples, to whom He was to reveal His mysteries, and from the scribes, who might have understood them, but whose minds were darkened by prejudice.

There were many distinct groups in Galilee. Not counting the publicans, there were the stricter Pharisees, holding themselves aloof from "the people of the land," while their leaders, the scribes, taught in the schools and were largely represented in the local courts of justice; they were the possessors of real power. Then there were the fisher-people, who lived mostly at the northern end of the lake in the sun and the air, handing down the traditions of their craft

from father to son and comparatively untainted by the vices of great cities. Radical in politics, they were conservative in religious matters, and it was from this class—with a sprinkling of publicans, who could read and write Greek, and so would be useful propagandists in the larger world—that Jesus preferred to choose His apostles. They had to be taught to think, and it was for them that He reserved the explanation of His deeper teaching. Down the western shore of the lake were the great squalid feverish towns, where men of all nations were employed in dyeing and weaving, and in the pickling and transport of fish; upon the life of these towns Jesus had pronounced sentence already. Away from the lake and the towns lived the peasants among whom He had been brought up, and what they needed was not teaching so much as rest and the experience of an unexacting companionship.

Baron von Hügel has somewhere said that the tone of the Fourth Gospel is less rich and various than that of the first three. In the Fourth Gospel there is a repetition which seems monotonous until we catch the subtle variation and enrichment of idea in each successive iteration of phrase or sentence. The whole book is concerned with the mystical relation between Father and Son on the one hand, Jesus and His own on the other. There is a circle of light surrounded by an ocean of darkness; men pass in or out as they are drawn by Jesus or Satan, under whose shadow the whole world lies. The one case in which Jesus seeks and saves an outcast there is that of the Samaritan woman, and

even she is very willing to be found. It would be as true as most generalisations are to say that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus draws men and women out of the circle of their wonted thought and life till they are capable of sharing His. In the first three He shares and transfigures theirs—always teacher, but also always and chiefly companion and friend. The Fourth Gospel is concerned with the thought of the life which is life indeed; the others with what we call life itself.

That was because Jesus was nearly always alone in Jerusalem, fighting a pioneer battle against a wrong idea of God and of life. In Galilee for a little time He was free just to *live* and to be Himself in the life of men. Up to the last week, the enemies of Jesus are not, in the Fourth Gospel, classified in groups at all; they are simply called the "Jews," though Pharisees and priests are mentioned two or three times. In Judaea Jesus is dealing with the comparatively narrow circle which frequented the temple courts; on the busy lakeside He is immersed in the life of a nation. Fellowship is the keynote of the next section of the Gospel, but of course is not confined to it. The idea breaks in before its time, so to say; its consummate expression is found in *words* in this great invitation, in sacramental deed in the wonderful supper-party which was at once the climax of the Galilean ministry and issued in its abandonment. In the section we are studying at present, we have Jesus the teacher and Jesus the companion side by side; at this point the first three and the fourth gospels meet.

The peasant people, then, are called, not so much to listen to His teaching, as to live with Him and watch Him live for a little while. "Take My yoke upon you" does not mean "Accept My teaching as the rule of your life," but "Share with Me the yoke of obedience that I carry." The plough is generally drawn in Palestine by a *pair* of small red oxen, over both of which one yoke is cast; it is a light beam of wood about four feet long, with small sticks some ten inches in length coming down below it, one on each side of the animal's neck, made fast underneath the neck by tying together stout leather thongs attached to the ends of the sticks—"the bands of the yokes." The ease of the yoke would depend on its lightness, its fit, and the relative size of the animals who are yoked together. If the old tradition is true that as a carpenter Jesus made ploughs and yokes, "My yokes are easy" may well have been the sign over the shop at Nazareth. The yoke of the Christian life is only easy because Jesus shares it, and goes step by step with us.

But how can we come to Jesus? The Jesus of Galilee seems far enough away in our noisy modern life, and we often wish the preacher would explain what he means by saying, "Come to Jesus." We must remember that the Cross lies between us and that invitation, so simple and yet so difficult to render in terms that the modern man can understand. A hundred questions come into our mind. Where is He to come to? How can we come to an unseen person, or cultivate an experience that comes suddenly, if it comes at all, and may leave us quite

as suddenly? No complete answer can be given to most of these questions until we have followed the Jesus of Galilee by way of the Cross to Easter morning, but at least we know where to come. He is to be found in the gospels; for most of us, to whom a mystical experience does not come easily, this is the best and surest way. "Think about Jesus," "live with the thought of Him, until it becomes habitual," is the modern counterpart of the call of the Incarnate Wisdom of God. The old Wisdom doctrine which Jesus made His own, means that our minds were built to find their focus, their settled abiding place in Him, the imagination of the most prosaically-minded of us to take fire at the thought of Him. He is the truth hidden behind art and music and the beauty of the natural universe, the "intellectual beauty" underlying all that is beautiful in God's world of sound and colour, and in the mind of man. All the restlessness of our moods in their exasperating ebb and flow comes from the fact that our minds can only find the poise of self-mastery when they have found themselves in Him.

But to find Him we must give Him time; layer after layer of prejudice and unbelief must be stripped away and the practice of the presence of Jesus must become habitual, before the great exchange can take place.

There are many ways of coming to Jesus, all suggested in this perfect gospel. Surely those scholars who describe "Come unto Me" as an erratic bloc in Matthew have never looked far beneath its surface. Not only are the harassed and over-driven

working-people bidden to come to Him, but the publicans *come* and lie down at table with Him (9, 10 —in that verse the word "came" is peculiar to this gospel); John's disciples, when by the death of their master the bottom has dropped out of their world, *come* and tell Jesus all about it (14, 12), and a little later on we hear (in Matthew only) of the Galilean crowd again, "There is no need for them to go away" (14, 16). Peter sees, or thinks he sees, Jesus walking over the water, and says "Bid me *come* to Thee upon the water," and He answers "Come"; so he walked upon the water "and *came* to Jesus"—all this part of the story is peculiar to this gospel. We are bidden not to prevent the children *coming* to Him; by its position in the sentence our evangelist stresses the word "come" once again. Last of all we have the emphatic "came unto Me" (25, 36 cf. v. 39) in the parable of the sheep and the goats. The publicans of the modern world still find Him not in mystical communion with the Unseen or through close gospel study, but in the new hope, the great companionship, which the gospel invitation offers them, and they make a real fellowship with Jesus their own with astonishing ease and homeliness. Others find their way to Him, like John's disciples, by the way of disappointed idealism, others in the mountain-top experience, when the veil drops away suddenly, and behind mountain snow and morning sun they see the secret of all natural beauty, the pre-existent Wisdom and Word of God Himself; but in the story of the transfiguration the evangelist turns his phrase the other way round; it was not

they who came to Jesus, but He who *came to them* and touched them (17, 7). Some daring spirits, like Peter, see Him first in the call of a great adventure; they watch Him marching through social and international unrest to His Kingdom, the Pioneer, who calls and equips them to join His crusade. Some, like the children, never really doubt Him, and, unless meddling wiseacres hinder, seem to be His own by the gift of a happy temperament; while others find Him as the last reward of a life of service to men. But for most of us the call to the heavy-laden is the word that meets our need. We are not simple like children, or outcasts like the publicans; we are not daring adventurers, or disappointed idealists, or yet self-forgetting philanthropists, and the mountain-top experience does not come our way. We are humdrum people who find it desperately hard to be sure that the love of an unseen Companion can be quite so satisfying as our evangelist would have us believe. Life for us is just one thing after another; our aspirations are only real enough to exasperate us by their futility, for if we have wings at all they are broken wings at best. To us, the weary and heavy-laden, tired of our dreams and resolves, of our righteousness quite as much as of our sins (for both sins and virtues are tame and unheroic), comes the good news that the Wisdom of God, which poets and prophets have guessed to be somewhere behind a veil their farthest-sighted vision could not pierce, has made Himself known to us in the Jesus of Galilee, and that if we cannot see Him with our own eyes, we can through the eyes of men and women like those

disciples of His who were so slow to understand Him. If only we will patiently day after day store up in mind and memory a treasure of thoughts about Him, by and by He will be able to impress Himself upon us as He did upon them.

A witty Oxford undergraduate is said, when asked to write an essay on Freewill and Predestination, to have left on his examination paper a limerick, which ended as follows :

> " I now understand what I am ;
> A creature that moves
> In predestinate grooves ;
> Not exactly a bus, but a tram."

Our minds move along grooves, backwards and forwards, but we make our own tramlines. " Think about Jesus " is really a Gospel-message to the matter-of-fact man ; it is not the whole message, but it is a beginning. The material offered us in the gospels is so abundant that a lifetime's study is not enough to exhaust its variety. The very thought of Him is restful ; as He said, " It will rest you to be with Me." But the outcome of it all will be that rest of soul, the sense that at last one is fulfilling one's destiny, will come as a great personal discovery—"I will give you rest . . . . you shall find rest."

All this has been perfectly expressed in a little-sung hymn by Charles Wesley, which I shall quote at length :

> " Oft I in my heart have said,
> Who shall ascend on high,
> Mount to Christ, my glorious Head,
> And bring Him from the sky ?

Borne on contemplation's wing,
  Surely I shall find Him there,
Where the angels praise their King,
  And gain the morning star.

" Oft I in my heart have said,
  Who to the deep will stoop,
Sink with Christ among the dead,
  From thence to bring Him up ?
Could I but my heart prepare
  By unfeigned humility,
Christ would quickly enter there,
  And ever dwell with me.

" But the righteousness of faith
  Hath taught me better things :
Inward turn thine eyes, it saith,
  While Christ to me it brings ;
Christ is ready to impart
  Life to all, for life who sigh ;
In thy mouth, and in thy heart
  The word is ever nigh ! "

If we cannot enter the Kingdom by soaring with the mystic, or stooping with the publican, we can live with Him who is the Kingdom, until, though we may not at once understand His meaning, we can at least grow humble enough to be ready to learn the lesson of the Cross.

Chapter V — *Jesus and the Rights of Man*
(Chap. 12, 1–21)

LEST we should feel that his identification of Jesus with the pre-existent " Wisdom " of God has removed Him from the common life and business of mankind, our evangelist passes on to illustrate and emphasise afresh the fact that He was what He was, not because He was less, but because He was more, human than the rest of us. He has made this suggestion already; we remember the comment he makes upon the Lord's claim to forgive sins—" the crowds praised God, who had given such authority to a Man among men." In this respect, too, He is like the " Wisdom " of the 8th of Proverbs; His " delight," the sphere of activity in which His power expressed itself with the happiest naturalness, " was with the sons of men."

Dr. Abrahams thinks that Numbers 27, 9–10 and 1 Sam. 21, 1–10 may very probably have formed part of the first and second lessons read in the synagogue on that Sabbath day when the corn was ripe and the disciples were charged with breaking the Sabbath law. The first lesson at the morning service was always taken from the " law "—that is, the Pentateuch, the second from the " prophets," a term which included the historical books. If Matthew is right in making the retort of Jesus double-edged,

it becomes much more effective when we can think of Jesus as quoting the first and second lessons read in public worship that morning! In any case, the argument is based upon the claim that here is one greater than David, greater even than the Temple which David dreamed of, but was not counted worthy to build; but—and this is the most important point—He is all this, not because He is "great David's greater Son," nor even because He is the Wisdom of God, but because He is the Son of Man, humanity incarnate. Matthew does not quote the words "The Sabbath was made for man," for he prefers to concentrate upon the Lord Himself, but the words "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" involve the same idea, for the claim of Jesus rests upon the rights which He possessed, not by virtue of His godhead, but His manhood. Matthew has a further contribution to make, for he cannot rest in the mere assertion of human rights and liberties; he passes on to bring out the fact that the Sabbath is not only made for man's rest and delight, but for man's service to his fellow-man. The Sabbath does imply a special obligation, just because it brings unwonted freedom from distraction, but it is an obligation not specially to God—all days alike should be consecrated to His service—but to men. Just because the Sabbath brings leisure for the worship of God, its hours of quiet should be specially devoted to the service of man; the right thing is to *do*, not merely to talk or to feel, good on the Sabbath day, to work quite as much as to pray.

Our Lord's relation to God is the subject of the latter part of this chapter; in the first half, which we are discussing now, the fact has been brought out that He is what He is, not only because He champions the rights of man against such orthodoxies and institutions as have been allowed to override his liberties, but because all He does is so gloriously human. At every point His appeal is to *human* feeling; "Is there a *man* among you," He cries, "who . . . . if a sheep fell into a well, would not let His interest in the animal override his scruples? How much better is a *man* than a sheep!" So we are prepared for the next great quotation from Old Testament Scripture, a quotation in which another tributary stream falls into the river of testimony. The two most fruitful Old Testament ideas in the development of Christology come from the Wisdom books and the "Servant-songs" of the Second Isaiah, and here both unite, one modifying and colouring the other.

We have already had a beautiful quotation of the "Servant-songs" in 8, 17, and here is another, this time from the 42nd of Isaiah. That it modifies the Wisdom-idea is soon clear. In the 8th of Proverbs we read, "Doth not Wisdom cry? . . . . beside the gates, at the entry of the city . . . . she crieth *aloud.*" On the other hand, the "Servant" does not strive nor speak in strident tones; no one shall hear His voice in the streets; evidently in his portraiture of Jesus, Matthew is correcting one testimony-doctrine by the other. The universalist climax of the passage is as impressive as its insistence upon

the gentleness and forbearance of the "Servant," and is convincing proof that so far from limiting the mission of Jesus to the Jewish people, our evangelist emphasised its catholic implications at every turn; we shall find fresh evidence of the breadth of his sympathies later on.

Chapter VI *An Alternative Theory Disproved*
(Chap. 12, 22–37)

It is now conceded by everybody that, however gloriously humane in its exercise the power of Jesus may be, it cannot be merely human; He is at least an inspired personality. His power is uncanny, and a thing may be uncanny because it is good or because it is evil. The crowds are ready with their explanation: Jesus is the promised Messiah sent and inspired by God. The enemies of Jesus have only one alternative to bring forward and so they proceed to make publicly an insinuation, which they had already put forward in a tentative way (9, 34), to the effect that He is inspired by the powers of evil, and is furthering their mysterious ends. Various theories are held as to the meaning of the name "Beelzeboul"; the most plausible, perhaps, is that it stands for "master of the house" of the dead, that is, of the world below. If so, special point is given to Matt. 10, 25—"if they have called the Master of the house master of the house"—*in the bad sense*—"what name will be ugly enough to call His domestics by?" If we could be sure of this derivation, first suggested by Movers, we should gather that the scribes had parodied a title which they knew Jesus used to describe Himself; "Yes, He is master of the house, as He says, but do you know

what house it is ? " However, we must not be too dogmatic, as the experts seem to be doubtful of the validity of Movers' etymology.

In any case Beelzeboul can be taken as the equivalent of Satan, and the meaning of the indictment is plain enough. Jesus is obviously wielding supernatural power; that is because He is a magician. The scribes are using a very deadly weapon—the fear, so intelligible in superstitious people, of anything unusual. Jesus replies first of all by shewing that a charge of this nature betrayed a confusion in the thought of the men who made it. If the power of darkness had come to such a pass that he was obliged to allow this inroad upon his territories, he must indeed be at his last gasp, for there is civil war in his kingdom, or worse still, he is at cross purposes with himself. The only rational explanation of these resounding triumphs over the empire of Satan must be that Strongman is, for the moment, overawed by the appearance of Strongerman, and is powerless to resist the spoiling of his goods. Anyhow —and here Jesus takes the aggressive—their own pupils, emboldened by His example, were casting out demons with some success; were they in league with the devil too ?

This appeal to the younger generation is almost unique in the gospels, but its meaning is obvious, and it provides us with a most interesting peep behind the scenes. Exorcism had been practised sporadically for a long time, but the success of Jesus had made of it a kind of cult among the pupils of the Rabbinic schools; they were imitating his methods,

and perhaps, if we may accept a suggestion offered by Mark 9, 38, using His name. He had said (Matt. 10, 35) that one result of His coming would be a division between one generation and the next, and so it had turned out. John the Baptist, like Elijah (Malachi 4, 6) brought fathers and sons together. He was a Puritan teacher, and when the young people came under his influence their parents would be delighted. For the moment it seemed as though the perpetual difference between old and young had been healed, the young coming to see the point of view of the older people, the old looking with kindlier eyes upon the young now that a young prophet had arisen to champion old-fashioned manners. But the preaching of Jesus had the opposite effect; it provoked questioning and was profoundly disturbing. When we wonder at the intense hostility shewn by the scribes to Jesus, we must take into account the probability that they dreaded His influence over those who had previously been their most docile pupils; whether the word "sons" really means that the exorcists were their children, or, as is perhaps more likely, their disciples, it is clear that one of their leading motives was professional jealousy.

Meanwhile, Jesus presses His analysis of the situation home. If it is true that a new and overmastering power has come into play, from henceforth there can be no neutrality as there can no longer be any illusion as to the issue at stake. It is war to the knife and the scribes, as responsible men, must commit themselves without delay on one side

or the other. By allying themselves with the power of darkness they cannot prevent, they can only delay, the consummation of the conquest already begun. They can "scatter abroad" the spoils of victory, that is, by aspersions which some of those who would otherwise have listened to Him were certain to believe, they can defraud Him of those who were by right His own, but that is all. The time would come when they would never be able to forgive themselves for their outrageous slander, for it was not as though they did not know better *then*, however successful they might afterwards be in persuading themselves that there was something in what they had said.

At this point our evangelist appears to be up against a difficulty. He has two versions of the next saying, one found in Mark's gospel, which was accessible to him, and the other in the collection of the sayings of Jesus which scholars call Q. Luke also had these two documents, or, at any rate, documents of the same character, before him ; in such a case, he always prefers the authority of Q to that of Mark, whereas Matthew generally gives us both, perhaps in order to be on the safe side. Mark's version reads in the gospel as we have it (Mark 3, 28) : "All things shall be forgiven *the sons of men*, sins and blasphemies, no matter how many their blasphemies may be ; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, has no forgiveness for ever, but is guilty of an eternal sin." Possibly the edition of Mark's gospel which Matthew saw had "Spirit" for "the Holy Spirit," and Matthew proceeds to give us the Marcan saying in a slightly abbreviated form. He makes "sons

of men" less liable to confusion with the name "the Son of Man" by explaining it as meaning "men," and simplifies the last part of the sentence, reading "the Spirit" for "the Holy Spirit." Perhaps he was doubtful whether "blasphemy of the Spirit" meant "blasphemy *against* the (Holy) Spirit" or "blasphemy of (man's) spirit"—if the latter meaning could be accepted, it would be allowable to translate the phrase "the lie in the soul." To his second version of the saying he adds the words—not found in Luke—"either in this age or in the age to come." When we say "adds," of course, we are really begging the question, for it is quite as likely that Luke omitted them because of their eschatological colouring.

Such an insinuation, made by men who, at least in the first instance, must have known better, committed them; it could not be retracted now, for it had been repeated after time had been given for reconsideration; the men who had given it the sanction of their official position, were branded for life. In the present world-order such an accusation was dangerous to Him; in the new age, so soon to dawn, it would be disastrous to them. Indeed, that is what has happened: we are perhaps unjust to the Pharisees in these days; it is because a world larger than they ever dreamt of can never forget that some Pharisees uttered this amazing libel. All that we know of them is coloured, however anxious we may be to be fair, by the fact, so well-attested and confirmed by their literature itself, that they stooped to use this last refuge of the ecclesiastical obscurantist. As a matter of fact, the same thing has been done again and again

in the history of the Christian Church; better men and women than their judges have been burnt at the stake as heretics or witches. Whenever we lend ourselves, as modern heresy-hunters sometimes do, to the suggestion that those who disagree with us are the devil's agents, we are really committing the sin that can never be forgiven.

It is doubtful whether Jesus ever thought of His Father as in any case unforgiving. In the parable addressed to Simon the Pharisee it is suggested that *all*, whether they love much or little are, in any case, forgiven—"He frankly forgave *them both*." Men may be cast out, a hand may wave them away when they seek entrance to a fellowship which would be shadowed and broken if such as they were admitted, but that cannot be the final word. Matthew has something more to tell us of the heart of the Good Shepherd by and by, but for the present it is enough tentatively to suggest that by the unforgivable sin may be meant an outrage upon love such as leaves a scar on the soul, never quite to be forgotten by the offender himself, however completely it may come to be ignored by the great Lover of souls.

After His easy victory over His assailants—and they must have been desperate indeed to snatch at a weapon so readily turned against them—Jesus sums up the logic of the situation. The coming of such a power into the world meant that men must make up their minds, and quickly, for there could be no hedging now; here was God's Spirit visibly at work amongst them; no one knew this better than the men who had committed themselves to this infamous

insinuation. The issue involved everyone; people could not stand by and watch, applauding this party or that in the great debate. The Galileans were far too much inclined to look on at the contest between Jesus and the scribes, to shout for the winning side. Jesus says in effect: "This is no mere game; it is a death-grapple between the strong man and the stronger in which everyone must take a hand, for the stakes are the souls of all of you." For them to be content with looking on when such issues are being fought out, to listen to such charges without protest, will be to take sides against Jesus, to make His victory barren, and to set themselves in futile opposition to the very power whose triumphs they are witnessing.

But Jesus is never content with attacking His enemies; in the next passage we overhear Him searching for some less despairing explanation of their state of mind and reluctantly laying it aside again. There were two possible alternatives. It might have been a charge rapped out at random and in exasperated heat, on the principle that any weapon is good enough in debate; or again, it might have been a malicious use of a libel they knew, or should know to be utterly false, in order to hoodwink men and women less subtle and more superstitious than themselves; if so, there could be no alleviation of their guilt until they came to a better mind. But, even if it were an "idle word," all the more terribly did it expose the men who uttered it, not once but many times. Our unconsidered assertions betray what we really have in our minds more fully than any

set speech can do. It was only too clear, whether the scribes were on their guard or not when they lashed out at Him so furiously, that they had merely revealed the corruption in their own minds. It did not embarrass Him, for He swept the suggestion on one side with glorious ease, but it hurt them, and would go on hurting them, as long as they retained the power to feel remorse. Interpreted in this way, we can see a promise of hope in the very words which seem to exclude all hope; for, so long as a man can suffer for his sin, not because of any imposed punishment from without, but inwardly, he is still a man and has a Saviour.

Chapter VII *The Necessity for Instant Decision* (Chap. 12, 28–50)

NOT all the enemies of Jesus are silenced yet; some of those who, perhaps, were not directly responsible for the charge which had just elicited so shattering a rejoinder, rally to the attack once more. It is as though they said, "We will concede your claim to supernatural power, if you will give us the guarantee we have a right to demand—a voice from Heaven. Miracles are not enough, for others can perform them; in these latter days, when for centuries no prophet has arisen in Israel, no one can be accepted as God's spokesman, if he cannot produce a voice from the sky to confirm his claim." It was said that when John Hyrcanus entered Jerusalem after one of his campaigns, his arrival was accompanied by a clap of thunder, whereupon all the people saluted him, not merely as priest and king—he bore those titles already—but as *prophet* also, and this in spite of his notoriously bad character. There had been such a voice at the Baptism, but, according to the first three gospels, only Jesus heard it, according to the Fourth, Jesus and John. Afterwards Peter, James and John heard it on the mountain of Transfiguration, but they were forbidden to tell anyone about it. The Fourth Gospel tells us that such a voice was heard in the streets of Jerusalem, when Jesus was

there, but even then " some said it was only thunder." The scribes are obviously counting upon their challenge being evaded, and are hoping to embarrass Jesus by pressing it upon Him ; they are met by a blank refusal. It is tempting to suggest that for " Jonah the prophet " in v. 39 should be read as " John " (the Baptist), and refer to the sign given at the Baptism of Jesus—the names Jonah and John are perhaps confused in 16, 17—but, even if v. 40 is not part of the text, the mention of Jonah in v. 41 seems to involve the retention of that name in v. 39. In any case " the sign of Jonah " is not his reappearance after his sojourn in the belly of the sea monster, but his preaching of doom to Nineveh. Justin Martyr, who seems to quote this passage, leaves out v. 40, passing straight on from v. 39 to v. 41 ; if he had known of the saying in v. 40, he would certainly have inserted it, for it suggests just the sort of correspondence between Old and New Testaments in which his soul delighted. As the appearance of Jonah in Nineveh was a portent to the heathen city, so was the presence of this One greater than Jonah a threatening demand for swift decision. There were other Gentiles, who, like the great southern queen, had not waited for God's messenger to come their way ; she had come from the other end of the world to hear Solomon's wisdom—the repetition of the key word " wisdom " will demand our attention presently. Now one greater than the Wisdom incarnate in Solomon, since they will not come to it, has come to them ; how great the responsibility of men, who not only have heard, but have

lived with Him, the very Wisdom of God incarnate, whose praises Solomon proclaimed!

In the "Wisdom of Solomon" (7, 24) we read "But what Wisdom is and how *she came into being*, I will announce, and will not hide mysteries from you, but will trace her out from the beginning of her *birth*" . . . . and then, a verse or two lower down (9, 1) we have an account of the birth of Solomon: "I also am mortal man, like all others . . . . I was moulded as flesh in my mother's womb . . . ." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Solomon is thought of as Wisdom incarnate; if so, the words "a greater than Solomon is here" mean "a more complete incarnation of the Wisdom of God than that given to the world in Solomon is here" and we are well on the way to "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Such a visitation, coming as it did to a generation so laboriously trained by centuries of revelation to recognise and welcome it, that their religious organisation and tradition was like a house "empty, swept clean and ready furnished" for the reception of its royal Guest, faced the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus with one of two alternatives—either they must accept His claim or fall back into the paganism, or a state worse than the paganism, from which they had been raised.

In the astonishingly successful and permanent reformation that followed the return from exile in Babylon, the unclean spirit of heathenism had been violently cast out, the house had been swept and furnished, and there was a devout and expectant company of law-abiding people, whom Jesus had

been ready to call "the salt of society," "the light of the world." Now He had come and most of them would not admit Him, partly because they did not like His appearance or His manners when He came, partly because He brought with Him a miscellaneous company whose entrance they feared would bring dirt and disorder into their haunts of ancient peace. They need not fear the intrusion of His motley crew of fishermen and publicans, Jesus replies; indeed, they should only be too glad to get the house well-tenanted, for that was their best protection against other and more dangerous guests. It is not that respectability is a bad thing in itself, though people who do not know what its opposite means are inclined to talk as if they thought it was—it is merely that it is most precarious. All about this well-lighted house, this "city set on a hill" is the darkness of the heathen world and no moral isolation is possible, for the spirit of uncleanness is for ever seeking fresh worlds to conquer or old worlds to reconquer. Even if they were never likely to fall back into rank paganism, there are other evil spirits worse than that of heathen immorality, spirits of pride and greed and jealous envy, who do not object to clean houses, so long as they are empty. The kingdom of evil is one, and all the agents of the devil work together; the unclean spirit has an understanding with others, introducing them to quarters which are not much to his own taste. It will be observed that Matthew alone gives us the point of this parable of the haunted house, by adding the significant word "empty."

The generation of Jewish people, to whom Jesus addressed it, were living on their past; they thought themselves reformed—for had not there been a great puritan revival under the preaching of John ?—and therefore secure; they little knew how true it is that houses left empty always fill themselves —we should say with dust and dirt, Jesus says with demons. Our Lord's warning still has its meaning for His Church; we constantly find all kinds of petty jealousies running riot in societies where many of the members most guilty of them have been genuinely converted. They feel themselves, and with good reason, to be reformed characters, and week after week tell each other what the Lord has done for them. But because they think themselves set up for life and free to go on sunning themselves in the comparative prosperity their deliverance from old vices has brought them, other spirits, worse, because getting to man's heart more quickly, have come silently crowding in and the last state is more disastrous just because more easily concealed beneath a respectable exterior, than the first. There is no mistaking it—by this time Jesus was preaching the gospel of peace to the publican and harlot, and judgment to the Pharisee, not because He liked sinners better than saints, as the author of that charmingly-written but thoroughly morbid book "De profundis" would have us believe, but because the sins of good-living people make them so sure of themselves that their complacency can only be pierced by the sharpest weapons, and alas! not always then, as the Cross was so soon to prove.

The issue is now clear ; the coming of Jesus into the life of His time meant war to the knife against all the forces of evil, entrenched to resist the " Strongerman " who is threatening to ransack " Strongman's " house and destroy all comfortable illusions. The coming of the members of His family to carry Him home at this juncture is the signal for His declaration that He intends to make His position absolutely clear, as He had just called upon His disciples to make up their minds once and for all and commit themselves to Him. Matthew draws a kindly veil over the motives which induced Mary to take part in this attempt to interfere with her adventurous Son, but the more outspoken Mark informs us that people were saying that He had gone out of His mind. She has allowed herself—and small wonder !—to be persuaded that He has not used her properly and the separating sword is already passing through her soul. It is probable that the scribes were responsible for this attack as for the others, and that His approaching retirement from the western lakeside altogether was due to the same sinister influence working upon the disciples. He calls upon them to tear themselves away from the entangling influences of home and Church, and, " stretching out His hands " to them in utter surrender, commits Himself to them ; from henceforth He will find " brother, sister, mother " amongst His newer friends. What this breaking of familiar ties must have meant to Jesus we can only guess. This was not the final word, for a last appeal to Nazareth soon follows ; but the mischief is done.

Chapter VIII — *The Word Sown in the Heart*

(Chap. 13, 1–23)

THE scribes have now definitely failed in their attempts to silence Him or get Him out of the way, and He is left free, without further interruption, to make His eagerly awaited appeal to His Galilean supporters. The crowd is so great that He is compelled to sit in a boat on the water to preach; there is real danger of His being crushed to death, so high has risen the tide of enthusiasm for the peasant-prophet, who has put to flight the cleverest debaters to be found anywhere. To everyone's amazement, Jesus proceeds to administer a cold douche to the excitement of His followers. He falls back upon parable; by this is meant obscure, figurative speech, which did not appear, even to the disciples, to be specially relevant to the situation.

Some of the people who listened to His words so eagerly were just casual hearers, whose minds were like the hard glittering path through the field on the hillside yonder; every passing footstep leaves an impression, but none leaves any deep or permanent mark. The seed He is sowing would lie for a moment on the surface of their minds; then Satan would send something else along to attract their attention, and they would be just as keen about that. Others were shallow, listening for all they were worth, but

they were not worth much—they have no depth of serious purpose in which the seed can take root. Directly the mood passed and the novelty began to fade, or trouble came because of the word, they would be gone. Such are the people who take offence and "leave the Church," and it is instructive to observe that Jesus knew all about them. Then there are others, whose minds are full already of weed-fibre, who are too much worried about other things to listen to any purpose; our congregations are full of them. Either they are beset by the anxieties characteristic of life in the present world-order, or they are busy in the illusive pleasure of getting rich, or they are such slaves to their lust for amusement that they are unable to think rationally for half-an-hour together. Jesus will appeal to these people later on, but for the present they are best away.

The most difficult features of the passage about "the mysteries of the Kingdom" which follows the parable of the Sower are softened, if not altogether removed, in our gospel. For instance, the words "to those who are outside" (Mark 4, 11) are altered to "to those," and instead of "*in order that* they may look and look, and never see," we have "*because* they look and look and never see." This may represent simply a more accurate translation of the Aramaic original of Mark, but, in any case, Matthew will not allow that anyone is outside the scope of the Gospel-message, and suggests that Jesus did not *intend* that the crowd should not see His meaning; He simply observes the fact that they did not, and acts upon His observation. Beginning at v. 11,

the passage may be paraphrased as follows: "Because to *you* it is given to discern the hidden truths about God's new world; they cannot fathom them. More truth lies open to the man in whose mind is implanted the seed of truth already; his responsiveness is rewarded at compound interest. But if a man has no capacity for receiving the truth"—for any of the reasons mentioned in the parable—"any fragment of the truth which may come his way cannot remain his for long. That is the reason why I use this figurative method in My teaching, because they may stare and stare, but cannot see what I mean; they may listen and listen, but cannot make out what I say, and so the prophetic word of Isaiah is finding fresh fulfilment: 'You shall hear and hear, but cannot understand, shall look and look, but cannot catch a glimpse of the truth. The mind of this people is dense, they have their eyes tight shut; there is no chance of their seeing with those eyes, or hearing with those ears of theirs; they cannot change their point of view, for Me to put them right.' But with *you* it is different; well for *you* that your eyes can see, your ears at least can hear! I am telling you the truth when I say that many prophets, good men and true, have longed to catch one glimpse of the things you are seeing, yet have not lived to see them; to hear the things you are hearing, but have never heard them."

According to our gospel, then, it is evident that the parables served a double purpose; at once to give the Teacher the breathing-space He needs to unfold the mystery to the inner circle—and this

the parable of the Sower obviously did very effectively by discouraging those who, for various reasons, were not ready yet to receive it—and to unveil truth which could only be conveyed to their untrained minds in symbol and suggestion.

Whereas Mark lays most emphasis upon the fact that the parables did veil the truth from the merely curious, the shallow, and the preoccupied, Matthew emphasises most strongly the second motive ; while such a method veils the truth from some, it *unveils* it to others. As is his custom, Matthew gives us the clue to the meaning of the whole section at the end, and in yet another " testimony " ; in v. 35 we read : " I will *open My mouth* "—by this expression is meant " I will take you into My confidence "—compare the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount —" in parables ; I will blurt out truths kept secret from the world's foundation."

Jesus is about to reveal a great mystery to His disciples, and mysteries can seldom be expressed in straightforward speech. The essence of this figurative teaching lies in the fact that it provides a test of the hearers' capacities. The truth it contains is never obvious ; if any part of it remains merely on the surface of the mind, it does not stay there long ; pains must be taken with it, or it will soon come to mean nothing at all. There is generally something baffling about the parables of Jesus, and it is significant that the period of His extreme popularity passes away when He begins to use them. His victories over those who had sought to silence Him have whetted the interest of the Galileans

to such a degree that the crowd of His hearers has reached unmanageable proportions. After the parable of the Sower had been uttered, we read no longer of the crowds being carried away by His teaching. Even the disciples are surprised at His roundabout methods; everybody would have appreciated straightforward propaganda; instead of that He gave them a parable which, if they understood its drift at all, must have seemed almost insulting to the intelligence of his audience!

We have already had the ideas of the Wisdom and the Word of God brought together; now another watchword, "the Kingdom of God," comes into view, for the "mystery of the Kingdom" means "the secret about the nature of the Kingdom," undisclosed to all but the initiated. We shall see presently that our evangelist regards Jesus as Himself the Kingdom, so that He is definitely associated with all three ideas—"Wisdom, Word, and Kingdom." This, then, is the secret, hidden from the world's foundation, which is at last coming to light. Before His coming He did not leave Himself without witness. First, there was the inspired prophetic word of Moses and the prophets; then, when the line of prophets came to an end, instead of the outward word there was the inward dream of a new age, in which God should be King and His will should be done on earth, as in Heaven; and the faithful lived on memories and hope. Now both the outward word of the old covenant written on tables of stone and in the inspired book, and the inward word about the Kingdom written on the hearts of good men and true

—the "righteous men" of v. 17—have found their fulfilment in Jesus, the pre-existent Wisdom and Word of God, the Inspirer of prophetic word and age-long dream alike, the Author and the Consummation Himself of the faith that makes the ages one. When a man receives Jesus into his heart the Kingdom has come for him, and all his dreams come true; "when they were willing to receive Him into the boat, immediately they were at the land whither they were going."

He is the Wisdom of God, the intellectual beauty half-concealed and half-revealed by the beauty of the natural world; He is the Word of God, at once the cause and the explanation of all human aspiration, whether expressed in prophet's message or idealist's dream; He is the Kingdom of God, for in Him the creative purpose of God's Wisdom as revealed in human life and speech, finds its expression in the organised life of man. All that went before prepared the ground of humanity for the Sower, all that was and is to come after till the Consummation of all things is the ripening harvest of the seed He sowed, who, when sowing the word over hill and dale was not enough, at last "on one bare hill sowed Himself."

Chapter IX *Evil in the World and the Church*

(Chap. 13, 24–30, 36–43, 47–56)

THE parables of the darnel of the field and of the drag-net seem to belong to one another; the fact that they should be taken together is suggested by their similar endings. But the "field" is the world, and the "net" is the Church, so they are not merely duplicate variations of the same theme. The slaves of the great Farmer are *not* allowed to uproot the darnel, whereas the fishermen in the other parable *do* cast the bad fish away. The meaning of this difference will be brought out in the sequel.

It is not only through their own shallowness and inattention that men fail to make the most of the message of Jesus; there is a deliberate opposition engineered from enemy headquarters. Such a slander as that reported in the last chapter could not be accounted for by any defect in human nature; there was an intelligence and a purpose behind it other than that of which the speakers were conscious. Granted that the minds of men are full of weed-fibre, that worries incident to life in a world like this, that a relish for money-making or the craving for pleasure preoccupy them, so that the word has little chance of taking root, not all the evils that infest the life of man can be traced to such things as these. A counter-offensive is going on, reacting to every move made by the forces of good; the incarnation of

the Christ-spirit in Jesus leads inevitably to a fresh incarnation of the power of darkness.

In Mark's Gospel the parable of the Sower is followed by that of the seed growing secretly. The Christ-spirit is ever being born anew in the life of man, and human nature is so constituted that nothing outside itself and the Divine Seed is needed for the perfecting of the fruits of the Spirit. If immediately visible results are often disappointing, as the parable of the Sower suggests, results not immediately visible are certain; the true seed is never sown without lasting good being done. Here—in the parable of the darnel—we have the counterpart of the parable of the seed which grows to fruition while men sleep. Jesus is not a mere optimist; He knows that the enemy is always active, that with every advance of the Kingdom the forces of spiritual evil move forward to meet it. In each age of the world's history the seeds of good and evil are planted afresh; human life gives cover to both equally, and the crops grow silently side by side. But when the harvest comes, there is inevitably a collision and a catastrophe, for they cannot live together, when both have come to full strength. Evil always wins in the first grapple, for it has weapons at its command which the Christ-spirit will not use; but in the onrush of its attack it overreaches itself; in a certain sense Satan does cast out Satan. In the preliminary encounter described in Matthew 12, he has obviously gone too far with his suggestion that Jesus is in the service of Beelzeboul, for His agents have been overwhelmed; but he only retires to prepare another attack.

Looking a little more deeply into the picture of the progress of the Kingdom presented by the two parables—those of the wheat and of the darnel, both growing while men sleep—we see that, after all, Jesus was, in the truest sense of the word, an optimist. The good seed is native to the soil, and grows by natural processes; on the other hand the darnel is an intruder, sown in soil alien to it by an outside enemy; in other words, good is natural to man, whereas evil is a perversion, only to be accounted for by influences outside human nature. There can be little doubt that Jesus Himself believed in a personal devil; the language He uses represents no mere accommodation to the demonology characteristic of the time. It seems clear that this conviction, so strongly held by Him, that if the First Gospel is right, He taught us to pray to be rescued from his power in our daily prayer, was based, not so much upon any speculation as to the origin of evil, but upon His own unshakeable faith in the goodness of human nature. If men said and did evil things, they were possessed by an alien power; when they crucified Him, it was only because they knew not what they did.

Jesus looked forward to a succession of world crises, a series of "harvests"; in other words, the Kingdom is not to come by a process of steady evolution, but by revolutions. He does not speak here of "the end of the world," but of "the consummation of the age." In the thought of Jesus the dualism lay very deep, even if it was not final; He never explains the mystery of the origin of evil, but He

shews Himself everywhere fully conscious of the powers at its command; even God, to whom all things are possible, cannot deal drastically with it, until it comes out into the open.

Partly deliberately, partly by just being Himself, He drew it out of the cover which it found in the unexpressed thoughts and desires of men ; He concentrated the enemy's fire upon Himself all through His ministry but most obviously and of set purpose in His last appeal to Jerusalem. The crash was inevitable, but after the explosion, as after all those which have followed, the Christ-spirit rose again and took possession of a fresh point of vantage; the process is slow and very painful, for a reason which will become clear in the sequel. But, beside the consummation of each world-age, Jesus looked forward to a final crisis, to which all the others led up, for "He must reign till He hath put all His enemies beneath His feet."

If wheat and darnel simply stood for spiritual influences of good and evil operating only upon human nature from the outside, it might be possible to destroy the darnel, or at least to keep wheat and darnel apart. But good and bad seed alike become incarnate in men and women, and you cannot destroy evil by killing bad men. Jesus does not say that " there is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us " that no distinction can be made between bad and good; He does not speak of men as we should be inclined to do, as part wheat and part weed. The seed is the Word of the Kingdom, and there is a clearly-marked distinction between the

man in whose mind the Christ-spirit has taken root, and the man who has become the tool of Anti-Christ. However little we may be able to distinguish between them, there are two kinds of people in the world, as different as wheat and darnel; in the early stages of growth they look alike, but in the crisis they take sides and reveal what has come to be their true nature.

"The field is the world," not the Church; we are forbidden to try to root out by force from the world, that is, to kill, those who look like tares; we are not forbidden to excommunicate them from the Church. Indeed, in the parable of the drag-net, which follows soon after, and deals with another aspect of the same problem, the fishermen do not wait, but immediately they have made a catch proceed to gather the good into vessels, and cast the bad away. The present writer is inclined to think that vv. 49 and 50 do not belong to the parable of the drag-net at all, but are repeated as a kind of refrain from vv. 40 and 41. The difference between the two parables lies in the fact that the farmer does not allow the darnel to be rooted up at once, while the fishermen do throw away the uneatable fish right off. In the parable of the darnel, persecution and "religious" wars are expressly forbidden. The Church would have been saved her most terrible disloyalties if she had seen the wickedness and the futility of trying to destroy her enemies. The only force at her command is moral pressure; when she takes to the sword to achieve her ends, or uses the weapon of State-compulsion to restrain heresy or profanity, she betrays her Lord and brings shame

upon herself. For here the analogy breaks down, as all analogies must. Men are either wheat or tares, but they are not *unalterably* so; they are still men. We know that the tares may become wheat, or at least that those who are doing the work of tares may and do come over to the other side. Leaving this question open, as in honesty we must, for this parable is not the last word of Jesus on the final doom of the lost, we are taught here at least that there is always hope while a man is a man, for he is only wheat or tare by analogy and for purposes of illustration; he is infinitely more plastic than any plant can be.

Two important practical questions clamour for attention at this point. Does this parable forbid capital punishment? The distinction made in the "Realism of Jesus" between State-law and the Christian law has a bearing upon this question as well as upon those of divorce and the communal life. Upon the whole, it seems to be a justifiable inference that a believer should never be himself responsible for a sentence of death; but, as this is the only passage in which Jesus deals specifically with the question of taking away the life of the body, we should not be justified in assuming that such a reference as this decides the question. If we believe that there is no possibility of change after death, it can never be right under any conceivable provocation to take away the life of the body; but if Peter really sentenced Sapphira to death—as Luke evidently thought he did—and if, as most commentators think, when Paul wrote "I have passed sentence upon the man

I refer to . . . . to hand him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh" (1 Cor. 5, 3–5), he meant "condemned him to death," neither Peter nor Paul can have thought so; indeed, Paul is explicit in the opposite sense, for he goes on: "that his spirit may be saved . . . ." Of course, we should prefer to think that all that was meant was a sentence of excommunication, but the phrase "destruction of the flesh" makes us pause. In discussing the wider question, as to whether, for instance, it is right to take life in self-defence or in war, other considerations must come in, for Jesus is just as emphatic upon our duty to defend the weak, as He is upon non-resistance to personal injury. In any case, the taking of life will be a last resort, and after the warning given in the parable of the darnel, the believer will think once, twice, and thrice, before he takes so terrible a responsibility upon his own shoulders.

In the parable of the drag-net—a long net with floats at the top and weights below, sometimes carried into the water from the shore, but more often let down from the side of a boat—Jesus clearly foresees that it will not be possible to allow abuses to ripen to the harvest in the Church. When the net is full, it is drawn to the beach, and the fishermen proceed to divide the fish into two piles, one for sale in the market, the other to be thrown back into the water. In this striking parable, the Church is distinctly told, after each ingathering of fish "of every kind," to sift her results, and, lest the bad infect the good, to exercise, if necessary, the power

of excommunication. The fellowship must be protected; Judas, like the man without the wedding-garment, is allowed, nay, commanded to go, after he has proved obdurate to the most heart-moving appeals. The Church is like a great net in the sea of the world's life; people come in and should be allowed to come in, for all kinds of reasons, and we should admit them all without scrutinising their qualifications too closely. Jesus invited men and women to share His fellowship, just because they were tired of other things; it was only after they had been with Him some time that He made further demands. His Church has no right to lay down harder conditions of entrance into her communion than He did, though she, too, will have her demands to make later on. But if "easy come" is to be our rule—and it is the only rule sanctioned by Jesus—we must not be afraid of accepting also the "easy go," subject to the qualifications which emerge in Matt. 18. Certainly in this parable at least the idea seems to be that of a very comprehensive Church with a fluid membership; her first door wide open and her entrance-hall roomy, but her inner chambers closed except to those who are ready to carry the Cross of sacrificial service. The qualification for entrance to Church membership should be a desire to enter; the qualification for a permanent place in the fellowship should be palatability and general usefulness; "they collected the saleable fish into vessels and let the worthless go."

Chapter X — *The Mystery of the Kingdom*

(Chap. 13, 31–35, 44–53)

THE twin parables of the mustard seed and the yeast in the dough carry the doctrine which is coming to light in this section a stage further. It would appear that it was the custom of Jesus to set a parable which would appeal to men and one directed towards the pursuits and interests of women, side by side—another example can be found in those of the lost sheep and the lost coin. But the second member of the pair is never a mere replica of the first. The parable of the mustard seed has to do with the outward organisation of the Kingdom, that of the fermenting yeast with its unseen permeating influence upon society. Jesus neither fears nor exults in the expectation of the outward growth of the Church; He simply states as a fact that the time will come when, despairing of devouring the seed itself, the birds, which as in the parable of the Sower, symbolise Satan's destructive agencies, will find shelter under His great name, which, like a tree, will overspread the world. The seed which He is sowing is of such lively quality that the plant which it contains in germ is swiftly destined to grow up above its rivals; mustard seed, as in the other saying about "faith like a mustard seed" (17, 21), suggests the penetrative

quality and vitality of the power which had come into the world with Him. This parable, strongly attested as it is, gives us the answer to those who urge that Paul rather than Jesus is the creator of the organised Church; Jesus was responsible, for He left behind Him, as seed is dropped into the ground, an idea so exactly adapted to the soil of human life that it was bound to organise itself in that highly complex institution, the Church. But the seed He sowed as the rest of the section goes on to shew, was no mere idea; it was Himself, and so the organisation in which it is clothed is rightly called His Body.

But its outward organisation is only a small part of the life of the Kingdom in the world. Not only is the Body of Christ present in the world for all men to see; His Spirit is abroad, everywhere permeating the lives and thoughts of men. No one can say how far that influence has spread, but it has always to be reckoned with. How much this idea of the power of the Christ-spirit, incalculable because unseen, means for this most pessimistic and yet most hopeful of the Gospels we shall see, when we come to the Passion story. Meanwhile we must enter our protest against the notion, fashionable in certain sections of the Church nowadays, that by the yeast is always meant an evil and corrupting influence. It is true that everywhere else in the New Testament the word is used in a bad sense; all the same, to apply the canon here is to upset the whole sequence of the passage. Dr. Abrahams—and from the Jewish side there is no greater authority—points out that, as "leavened"

bread was in itself more palatable than unleavened, the metaphorical use of "leaven" sometimes denotes an improving process. There is a good yeast—the Hebrew word is yeser—as well as a bad in every man; compare the sayings "Let a man stir up his good yeser against his bad," and "Rouse thy good yeser and thou wilt not sin." The fact that nowhere else is the word used in its good sense in the New Testament is irrelevant; in any case we should be loth to think of Jesus as endorsing so despairing a view of human life and history; happily there is no reason whatever for doing so.

The next three parables bring us back into the main Wisdom stream again, and carry the great truth contained in this section to its complete unfolding. The testimony which comes in here (13, 35) is decisive as to the idea in the evangelist's mind. The ultimate purpose of the parables is not to veil, rather to *unveil* the mystery of the Kingdom. All God's age-long secrets are now being expressed in the life and speech of men, and, if the parables seem obscure, it is only because they cannot be expressed in quite unambiguous language. We can only talk about "the simple gospel" because we are content to play upon its surface. The treasure, though available for all who will dig for it, is *hidden* in the field; it does not lie on the top of the soil.

In the parable of the hid treasure it would at first sight appear that the discovery is made by accident; but when we look a little more deeply into its imagery, we see that it is not altogether so. The man, we may imagine, comes across the treasure when he is ploughing

his master's land, or perhaps a plot of ground which he rents from the landowner. His ploughshare grates upon something hard, and as he stoops to see what the obstruction is, he sees the gleam of gold. He has heard tales of treasure buried somewhere in the neighbourhood, and has played with the dream that he might find it, but has never really believed that he would be the lucky man. In desperate haste he marks the spot and kicks back the earth over the place. At the end of the day's work he rushes home and counts his savings eagerly. Yes, he has just enough to buy the land. The agent, upon whom he calls first thing next morning is surprised and inclined to be suspicious, but decides to take the money; it is poor, thin soil anyhow, not of much use to its owner; what this peasant-fellow wants with it he cannot make out, but that is his affair. So the bargain is struck, and the labourer, scarcely able yet to believe in his good fortune, goes back to the field, now his own, hugging to his heart the document of transfer which means so much to him.

Perhaps the people who think that they are conferring a favour upon a preacher of the gospel by coming to hear him, so long as he does what they consider to be his duty by them, are more to be pitied than blamed; the real joy of the discovery of the love of Jesus has never dawned upon them. The great tragedy of our half-Christian life in these days is not that so few hear the gospel—that is sad enough—but that so many of those who hear have the supreme ecstasy of life close to them, and yet it might be in another world for all they know or seem

to want to know of it. They sing the hymns of the saints, and the contrast between the rapture of the words they sing and the dulness and earthliness of their demeanour would be ludicrous, if it were not pitiful. Strange that they should miss it so utterly, when the treasure is barely hidden by the soil on which they are standing! But it is hidden, not buried deeply it is true, yet hidden from them all the same, because they do not think of religion in terms of joy, but only of duty. The gospel speaks of heavenly joy and they know of nothing more desirable than such earthly comfort as they can snatch from a hard world, or their consciences will allow them. The secret of all the dulness and bewilderment characteristic of average Church life is perhaps that we are not prepared to pay the price; for, when we are, we shall not be long in finding the treasure. We have not yet got to the point, when we shall feel ready to part with anything in the world, if only we can discover the secret of which they tell us, for ourselves. We have not to pay in cash, or at least not chiefly in cash, but we must give up something to make our own the kind of life in which the love of Jesus is to be found and can be kept. Our carefully-fostered self-respect, our precarious complacency, those easy judgments upon ourselves, for which we have had to fight so hard and argue with our consciences so long; we have to give ourselves away, and the normal man is not convinced that an ecstasy of the spirit, which anyhow does not appeal to his matter-of-fact mind, is worth the price of penitence. Anyone can feel the chill, the unnatural constraint,

the sense of unreality, which creeps into the air of a service, when we give out such a verse as :

> " The guiltless joy, the sweet distress,
> The unutterable tenderness,
> The genuine, meek, humility,
> The wonder, Why such love to me ? "

And all the time this transport of joyful surprise is the very secret spring from which the life of the spirit is fed ; all the mean jealousies, the poor-spirited sensitiveness, the striving for notice, that make barren our Church life, are but the pitiful dust that gathers in the mind that has never been refreshed and sweetened by adoration, by the relief of self-forgetting which follow self-despising. The only ploughshare which can and does strike through the most stubborn clod is the preaching of the Cross, and our prayer must always be

> " Sweeten my bitter-thoughted heart
> With Charity like Thine,
> Till self shall be the only spot
> On Earth that does not shine."

The only thing that can make the sacrifice to which Jesus calls us tolerable is that our sense of loss should be forgotten in the joy of an overwhelming surprise ; if we fell in love with Jesus as men fall in love with their wives and children, no Church work would be too hard, no sacrifice a sacrifice at all.

In the second parable, that of the pearl of great price—the Kingdom, and in this gospel at least the Kingdom is Jesus Himself—is the Finder rather than the Found, for we should not have been led to seek

for Him, unless He had already found us. If our discovery of Him is the great compensating surprise of life, His discovery of us was a surprise worth coming from Heaven for. That we are moved to seek Him proves that He found us long ago, and has paid the price already, nor is He going to be cheated out of His bargain by all the peculiarities of our temperament. Yet He cannot "realise" His purchase, until we discover Him in our turn, for we are not mere chattels after all.

Some of us are so reluctant to believe what seems too good to be true that we look anywhere but in the right place. Yet our very discontents are His voice saying, as in the children's game, "You are warm, you are warmer . . . . you are boiling!" We are bought with a price, but cannot be made over like an article purchased over the counter; He has to wait our leisure, till we are in the mind at last to hand ourselves over to happiness, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer." It remains true that He has found us already, the pearl of great price, the one being capable of loving Him back in a splendid but barren universe, a house nobly furnished, but all in disorder because he for whose marriage with the Lover of his soul it was designed, has not yet come to his senses; it cannot be a home for Him, until we are in our right place in it. We go back to Proverbs 8, and find the word

> "Myself the Father's pleasure,
> *And mine the sons of men.*"

Here we come to another of Matthew's great

symphonies, and we must stop to catch his music. Readers will remember that, by weaving together a series of disconnected passages, almost all peculiar to this Gospel, we were able to construct a kind of systematic account of the various ways in which we come to Jesus, or He comes to us. Much the same process can be carried out, if we take the word "find," as it occurs in this Gospel, for it is another of our author's great words. But here, as there, the evangelist does not create the symphony, but suggests it by his rendering of the sayings of Jesus or of incidents in the story of His life and death. We will gather up the texts first. In 7, 14 we have, in Matthew alone, the words "few there are who *find* it"; in 10, 39 "He that has *found* himself shall lose himself, and he that has lost himself in love for Me shall *find* himself"—here again the word "find" is, in both places, peculiar to Matthew; in 11, 29 "you shall *find* rest for yourselves" (once more in this Gospel alone); in 13, 44, 45 a man "*found*" the hidden treasure, the Merchantman "*found*" the pearl (these two parables in Matthew only); in 18, 13 "if he be so happy as to *find* it" (Luke, laying stress rather upon persistency in search than upon the joyful surprise of discovery—"until he find it"); in 20, 6 "he *found* others standing," and in 22, 9, 10 "all whom you *find*," "all whom they *found*, bad as well as good"; in 27, 32, "going out of the city, they *found* a man." The word in every case but one of these is peculiar to Matthew, and in that one instance the emphasis upon it is sensibly different from that traceable in Luke's version.

The passage we were considering, when we turned aside to enumerate the passages in which this word is emphasised, gives us the clue to their classification. They sort themselves out into two groups, one illustrating our discovery of Jesus, the other His discovery of us. When we find Him, we also find a narrow, troublesome way, but a way that leads to life; at the same time we find the secret of restful living, because, in losing ourselves, that is, in leaving behind us our own interests and prejudices, as we enter the narrow gate, we really discover the meaning of life and of our own peculiar temperaments. In other words, we discover ourselves, when we discover Him; in the glory of the present surprise, all our past is explained, and we can face a difficult future with a mind at peace. But, if we find Him as the hidden treasure, long sought after, yet found when least expected, He finds the men and women He came from Heaven for always in unlikely places, with an ever-fresh burst of surprise. Our life with Him and His life with us begins in a mutual surprise of swift recognition on both sides, and new discoveries relieve the tedium of the way, for Him and for us. He is like a householder, who, anxious to leave no stone unturned to get the work in His vineyard done, goes out at the eleventh hour and finds men, whom nobody else would dream of employing, ready to come in, without a word passing about wages on His part or on theirs; when disappointed of His expected guests, He sends His slaves scouring the roads, and welcomes a motley crowd, with undesirables in the majority—both "bad and good," the "bad" coming

first—into His banqueting hall—" anybody you find," no matter who, He tells them. Even on the ascent of Golgotha itself He " finds " a man—Simon the black man—to help Him with His Cross, and wins this negro conscript, unlikeliest of all unlikely people, for His friend and follower. The people whom nobody wanted were His constituency, and the life of the Man of Sorrows was made happy, because He not only sought them, but *found* them. " He was equal with God, but He did not find satisfaction in that, ... but, giving it all up, He put Himself on a level with a mere slave," and was only too glad to do it, because " by being so human as He was, He could be *found* by the world's slaves and outcasts."

The last of our three parables explains itself. It gives us the picture of a scholar-disciple. He is already rich in the treasured learning of the centuries when he makes the discovery which lights up and binds together all else that he has learnt. So he goes to school again and is glad to sit at the feet of the Lord along with the beginners. It might be a description of our evangelist himself, for no writer in the New Testament expresses more vividly the joy of discovering Jesus, yet no one is able with such consummate art to illuminate the old by the new, and the new by the old. In these days we think of such a scholar as Rendel Harris. How much he is able to make of his treasure for the benefit of the others! Out of his treasure he brings a perennial store of new ideas and after them all his gathered knowledge comes pouring out with the light of the one great discovery upon it, harmonising it all.

The scholar-disciple is like a caterer for an endless succession of guests with very varied tastes, and, as they listen, they wonder less at his learning than at his radiant devotion to the person of his Lord, for whose sake he is glad to learn from the humblest of his fellow-pupils.

Book IV

His Name shall be called "God With Us"

THE secret of the person of Christ has now been unfolded; it remains to describe the nature of His mission. We have passed the great "I" of the last verse of the gospel (28, 20), and move on to "with you." In other words, this fourth section of the gospel is to be concerned with two closely-related subjects—we are to watch Jesus first breaking away from the old Church in which He was born, then laying the foundation-stones of the new. We shall follow the course which has been found convenient in dealing with the earlier sections; summarising the contents of 13, 54–19, 1 in broad outline, then taking seriatim the incidents and teaching these chapters contain.

The section begins, appropriately enough, with the rejection at Nazareth, and proceeds to describe the final disappearance from the scene of John the Baptist, the last link between old and new, his rejection foreshadowing that of his Successor. Forthwith Jesus begins a series of experiments in sacramental fellowship, first of all with a crowd of Jewish men and women; we shall see, how startling must have been some of the innovations made at the feeding of the five thousand when we come to examine the incident

itself more closely. That experiment ends in temporary failure, and Jesus breaks away again, bidding a regretful farewell to His old associates, the Galilean peasant-people, and launching His ship's company on their uncharted voyage over the troublesome sea of the world's life. The ship is all but buried by the waves ; the adventure they had undertaken under His compulsion, and the experiment one specially-daring member of the fellowship, Simon Peter, tries to make on his own initiative, alike almost end in disaster, and Jesus hastens to their rescue. A short visit to the western shore of the lake follows at this point, but we hear no more of preaching, only of healing. It is brought to a close by a fresh attack on the part of the Pharisees, and the reply which Jesus makes to them shews that He has advanced very far from the standpoint of His hopeful appeal in the great Sermon, when He described Himself as not come to destroy the old religion. His command to His disciples now is "Leave them to go their own way ; you must have nothing more to do with them." The difference between old and new is shortly summarised, and Jesus disappears to break fresh ground.

The next passage is one on which the writer takes a view which has not yet obtained recognition. Jesus is still seeking a constituency, and the contention which will be advanced is to the effect that **15, 21–39** really describe a ministry no longer centred upon His own people, but directed towards *Gentiles*. Such a theory involves a complete reversal of the traditional exposition of the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the acceptance of a suggestion already made by

one or two scholars, that the feeding of the four thousand is no mere repetition of that of the five thousand; that it stands for a deliberate attempt to enter into sacramental fellowship with a crowd mostly composed of heathen people.

How far such an experiment was satisfactory we have no means of deciding; in any case, Jesus seems to be back on familiar ground at the beginning of Chapter 16, for a fresh challenge of the Pharisees fails to be noticed here. They are, if our first evangelist is right, already working in collusion with those who were normally their bitter enemies, the Sadducees. They have gained confidence by His sudden withdrawal, and evidently think they are getting the better of their dangerous rival. Jesus answers to the challenge by a yet more explicit warning to His disciples once and for all to sever all the ties that bound them to their old teachers, and by another much more prolonged retreat. It would seem that, after His daring experiments and His survey of the ground His disciples will have to cover in their world-wide mission, He settles down to actual Church-building, and, for that purpose, concentrates upon the men who are to be His foundation-stones. Simon Peter, by his confession, qualifies himself ultimately to become the chief officer of the new society, but is not ready yet to take his place, for his first exercise of the newly-bestowed power proves that he cannot share the deeper thoughts of his Master. This is serious, because these thoughts are every day more and more filling His mind, as He visualises the road which He and they are to follow before the ground

can be cleared, and the building of the Church begun. Henceforward the idea of the Suffering Servant of God becomes steadily more central; we feel ourselves moving downhill to the Cross.

Jesus is very anxious that the men who are following Him shall be under no illusions as to their immediate prospects, and so, when they fail to understand His more explicit prophecies of the Cross, He gives them the chance of leaving Him now. From this time forward to follow Him will not be so easy as before; it will not be by any means a triumphant crusade (for the next stage of the journey at least); but this painful experience is necessary, for before they can share His victory, they must learn to follow without question. That, utterly nonplussed as they are, they still follow, reassures Him, and He seeks to rouse their drooping spirits, first by a promise, then by a foretaste, of the speedy coming of the Kingdom. The essential point in the Transfiguration story, as it is recorded in this Gospel, is to be found in the fact that Moses and Elijah are seen to fade out of the picture, while Peter, James and John are left with Jesus. The incident that follows—that of the healing of the epileptic boy—is not brought out into relief in Matthew, but it serves to illustrate the essential condition of success in the enterprise to which He has called His company of disciples—it is a faith, so lively and imaginative that it can remove the very mountain itself, if it is a mountain which separates Jesus from them.

The rest of the section is concerned with the treatment of two difficult questions. The fascinating

story of the Temple-levy and the coin in the fish's mouth comes in, because it bears upon the problem of the relation between the old and the new Church. They will have to live side by side for a time, and Jesus has just told His disciples that they are to tear themselves away from some old loyalties. Does that mean that they are to disown all obligations to temple and synagogue? No, says Jesus, not necessarily; as a matter of fact they might, if they chose, for time will shew how truly emancipated they are. But, for the present, the less they say about their immunities the better; they must avoid giving offence, where no vital principle is at stake; in such matters as the support of the temple, they will do well to live and let live. The eighteenth chapter is concerned with that other perennial problem, how Christians are to get on with one another in the new and very delicate relationship, upon which they are entering; and, specially, if the fellowship, as has been made clear, is to be open to all and sundry, what are they to do with the difficult brother, and how are they to demean themselves, in face of the hundred and one exasperations that are inevitable, when men from all classes, and in all stages of moral and spiritual development, try to work together. And so the fellowship section ends with a demand for endless forgiveness and untiring mutual accommodation.

Chapter II — *Premonitions of the Cross* (Chap. 13, 54–14, 23)

THERE is nothing very remarkable in the story of the rejection at Nazareth, as recorded in Matthew, apart from the new emphasis already noticed. We may stop to observe, however, that our evangelist evidently found Mark's frank statement of the limitations of the power and knowledge of Jesus in "He could not do any mighty work there . . . . and was surprised at their unbelief" disturbing, as many believers have done since; so he avoids the suggestion of inability and disappointment by writing instead "He *did* not do *many* mighty works there, because of their unbelief." He also omits "and among His kinsfolk" from the saying about the prophet who preaches away from home by preference, perhaps to avoid a slur upon Mary. It is clear that we have passed the top of the hill now, and are travelling down towards the Cross, and the swift passing of admiration into repudiation in His native village is our first clear premonition of His final rejection in the city which had become in His boyhood a second home to Him. The narrative of the death of John the Baptist follows, as in Mark; our evangelist makes only one or two slight changes in it, but does not fail to add his own exquisite touch at the end. We have already dwelt upon the beauty of the idea underlying the phrase

"they came and told Jesus" (Chapters 4 and 9); it is enough to notice here that, as time-honoured landmarks one by one disappear, all that was best in the old Church finds its home in the new. For Jesus the death of John means yet another break with the past, and is another omen of the future.

The feeding of the five thousand on the eastern side of the lake follows, as in Mark's Gospel, but Matthew adds two significant touches. He is the only one of the four evangelists, who all tell the story, to mention the presence of women and children at this sacramental meal, and he also emphasises the fact that the *disciples* waited on the crowd. That the women and children should be allowed to sit down with the men was an unheard of thing, and still more startling was the fact that, in this case men waited on women. In the story of the feeding of the four thousand the same details are brought out again in this gospel only; it is obviously no accident. This is an adventure in fellowship indeed. He had already invited the working people to share His secret knowledge, now He gives them the opportunity of living with Him for a little while and of seeing for themselves what trustful dependence upon the Heavenly Father can do in an emergency, if His children are willing to share round whatever is available. When He is alone, He will not turn stones into bread; as Head of the family, He does multiply the loaves—a practical object lesson in the miraculous power of fellowship and trust. That it was a sacramental meal is brought out plainly by the Fourth Gospel, but is implied in the first three.

But the experiment ended in another failure; the

Fourth Gospel is explicit that the evening closed with an attempt to make Jesus King. The twelve themselves are apparently in sympathy with the Galileans, and a very embarrassing situation is the result. Jesus only escapes by constraining the disciples—against their will, for both Mark and Matthew say "He compelled them"—to embark in the boat again, and sending the Galileans home by land, while He Himself slips away into the hills alone. It is now only too clear that He could not continue His ministry in Galilee without arousing expectations He could not gratify. He never faced an issue until it challenged Him, but now He must think and pray His way through to the next step. By this time the general course of the last year of His ministry lies open to Him. He knows it will not be long now, before He is to be left altogether alone. When the next Passover came round, the company of five thousand men not counting the women and the children, had dwindled to eleven, and at the end of that last supper, as now, He is to be left alone; and then there will be no escape to the quiet hill-tops. The coming of such a Saviour into such a world would only mean another Martyrdom, when the wheel of love and sin had run full circle.

Chapter III — *Peter the Adventurer*

(Chap. 14, 24–33)

JESUS has now left His disciples for the first time since they had forsaken all to follow Him, and the events of the next few hours are to shew that the craft which He had launched on its long voyage was not yet seaworthy. The boat was on its way, but what of the crew? The futile attempt to make Him King, to which they had been privy, had proved that He and they were still living in different worlds; their idea of Him was distorted by the projection of their own ambitions, for they had not yet been able to break away from their Galilean moorings. As His own way opens up before Him, He turns to look down upon the lake and there sees the very image of His fears—a boat's crew struggling vainly against a contrary wind to reach an unattainable destination; a company of baffled, disappointed men, "in two minds" and at their wits' end, because they were rebelling against facts. They were being driven back His way, as they would be driven again and again, until their submission to His mastery was complete.

Luke omits the story altogether and both Mark and John leave it open to us to think that Jesus appeared on the beach, and walked along it until they joined Him; what we call the "miracle" depends upon the use of a Greek preposition in the First Gospel. We may render his narrative: "At three o'clock in the morning He came to them, walking over the sea"—

Mark and John may be translated "on the shore." "And the disciples, catching sight of Him as He walked *along the shore* were startled, saying 'It is a ghost,' and cried out in fear. He talked at once to them in His familiar tones; what He said was 'Courage, it is I; there is nothing to be afraid of.' Peter answered Him and said, 'If it is really you, Lord, bid me come to you *over* the water.' And He said 'Come.' So Peter got down out of the boat and *did* walk over the water, and *came to Jesus.* But then the violence of the wind caught his attention and he was afraid; for the first time he felt himself sinking, and cried 'Save me, Lord.' Jesus at once stretched out His hand, took hold of him, and said to him, 'How feeble your faith is after all! Why were you in two minds all at once?'"

I know so little of the limits, if there are any, of what is possible to faith in God that I have no difficulty in believing that both Jesus and Peter did walk over the surface of the water, but it is fair to point out that, though three evangelists tell the story, so far as Jesus is concerned, only the one who records Peter's adventure implies that there either was, or seemed to be, a miracle at all. Those who feel that the walking over the water is a hindrance to faith have a right to discount the evidence of the First Gospel on the strength of the other two; but the story of Peter's experiment is so realistic and true to character that, in spite of Mark's silence, there must be some basis of fact beneath it.

Association with Jesus always sets men upon adventurous experiments. They *come to Him* not

only when they have tried and failed, not only, like the disciples of John, when dreams have faded and the eager days are gone, but in the gay and beautiful idealism of youth, when they blithely undertake tasks at which they are sure to fail. This is an authentic coming to Jesus, in response to a real coming of the Saviour to them ; it involves a response to His appeal which He never fails to encourage. He is the inspirer of all bright new ideas which middle-aged people count impracticable, as perhaps some of them are ; but it is great that they should be tried. The normal business of life keeps most of us for most of the time in the boat with the others ; but there is a place in the service of the Kingdom for what are called " wild-cat schemes," for lonely and desperate adventures. They are like walking over the water, for they involve a defiance of circumstance ; but Jesus says " Come " —it is not a permission, but a command—" you will soon discover, *not too late*, how much you need Me." Peter is to be the first member of the new fellowship, the rock on which the Church is to be built, precisely because he was the first to " launch out into the deep," to be ready to leave the boat of his own and his companions' ideas, and try to live in his Master's world. A year later he followed still when the others fled, even though it was only " to see the end " of all that had made his new adventurous life possible. Again the bleak wind of circumstance was too much for him, and again he began to sink ; but he got there because he ventured into the unknown that he might share whatever befel a Master, whom he could never understand, but must always follow.

My own conviction is that the disciples *thought* they were in the middle of the lake; they had really been driven back upon the eastern shore by the "contrary wind" carrying them, in spite of their hard rowing, ever further from their destination. The Fourth Gospel seems to bear this out, for we read (John 6, 21) "when they were willing to take Him into the boat" —to give up their own ideas and adopt His—"they were instantly at the land which all along"—without their knowing it—"they had been making for." It will be noticed that the fourth evangelist does not tell us clearly on which side of the lake they actually landed; all he says is that the crowds could not find Jesus till the day afterwards. I think it quite likely, too, that Peter thought He saw Him walking over the water—we must remember the darkness and the condition of their nerves—when He was walking along the beach; that all Peter had, as a matter of fact, to do was to walk through the shallow water to get to Jesus, but that he felt as if he was walking on the surface of the water, until he began to look about him. The "contrary" wind which besets us in our attempts at service, so that it often seems to be a case of two steps back for one forward, only drives us back upon Jesus. The disciples thought they were being driven away from their goal, and the process continued until they gave it up in despair; precisely at that moment they found that He was with them, and that the land to which they were being carried by a series of disappointments was the very shore which they had been meant to make for. It is true that, when the Captain takes command, "all the ships

come safe to land, all our dreams come true," but the land we finally arrive at lies generally in a very unexpected direction.

We have still to notice one very vivid word, which is used by our evangelist only here and in one other place. That place is Matt. 18, 6, where we have the haunting saying about the danger of hindering "one of these little ones." In that passage Matthew has "sunk in the deep sea," as compared with Mark "thrown into the sea," Luke "flung into the sea." The only way of getting rid of mischief-making spirits, it was thought, was to drown them in deep water. We may well feel that the cure of souls is the most precarious of all human undertakings, and, as we think of this sombre warning, we wonder whether we are not, with our clumsy handling of the little and the sensitive, within measurable distance of bringing down upon ourselves the terrible curse that falls on those who hinder the little ones. To share the great adventure with Jesus is indeed to walk on the water; all we can do is to go very carefully, and, when we are "beginning to sink," cry "Lord, save me!" Sometimes we think, if we had known the harm we should do, we should never have taken up the work upon which we embarked so lightheartedly. It is a consolation to remember that He is responsible after all for our undertaking a task which He knew was utterly beyond us; when we said "Bid me come to Thee over the water," little knowing what we were asking, it was He, not our own self-confidence, that answered "Come."

Chapter IV — *Jesus the Radical* (Chap. 15, 1–20)

HAVING rejoined His disciples on the eastern shore of the lake, Jesus crosses over the water to the western side for the last time. They land at an unfrequented spot, but He is immediately recognised, for by this time the whole plain of Gennesaret is familiar with His face and fame. The crowd quickly gathers again, but He is anxious to be away. For the time being the personal touch in His healing is absent; we only hear of people pressing to touch the border of His robe, of a wholesale treatment of disease, which He had never encouraged before. Up till now He had been at leisure to give Himself up to each one of His patients in turn, but the sands of the Galilean ministry are fast running out; though His healing power has never been more manifest, Jesus Himself is preoccupied with the future. His failure, as they would interpret it, to take advantage of the opportunity given Him the other night to become really leader of the people, has emboldened those inveterate enemies of His, the scribes from Jerusalem, to shew their faces again; no longer do they wait for Him to come into town or synagogue or shew His hand; they are dogging His footsteps. He is, they infer, rapidly losing ground, and they hasten to press home their advantage. So they attack Him and He replies at once. There is no

quarter on either side, for the die is cast. Never again did Jesus preach in their synagogues or teach in their streets; He is ready now to break away altogether from the Church in which He had been brought up.

Before He does so, however, He exposes once more the hollowness of these men's pretensions to leadership in religion, and then, calling the crowd together, when His enemies have once again been beaten off, puts in the plainest possible way the difference between their teaching and His own. Their creed was based upon abstentions, His upon a new spirit; they put the interest of organisations in front of obligation to persons, with Jesus the rights of man and woman are always paramount. This fact is well illustrated by His treatment of the two great questions which divided the school of Shammai from that of Hillel. On both questions Hillel took the more liberal view, while Shammai was unbendingly conservative. Shammai forbade divorce for any reason except that of misconduct, and was equally rigid in his interpretation of the Sabbath law. Hillel allowed divorce for many reasons, if, for instance, a wife cooked her husband's food without salt. This phrase should not be taken literally, for we read in the Talmud that Jesus cooked His food without salt or "burnt His food" in public; it simply means "if she is a heretic." On the Sabbath question Jesus took sides with Hillel, on that of divorce with Shammai. Our inference should be that where personal relationships were concerned He was very strict, but that where it was simply a question of one's attitude to a thing, He

allowed much greater freedom; this is, of course, what we should have expected. It is right to say that apologists for Pharisaism indignantly deny the charges that Jesus makes against the Rabbis on the question of "Corban," pointing out that "whatever else they may have failed in, the Pharisees always showed the most devoted respect to parents." Moreover, Dr. Herford quotes a passage from the "Mishnah," or the codified Rabbinic tradition, which proves that this question was actually faced by them. But the passage he quotes is ambiguous, and in any case the Mishnah's evidence is later than that of the gospels; one wonders whether the very attempt to deal with the problem may not have been due to the challenge of Jesus.

There is, perhaps, more force in the rejoinder that He did the same thing Himself, when He said "He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"—that is, that He called upon His disciples to give duty to parents a second place. But it is clearly one thing to love father or mother more than Jesus, and quite another to disregard all obligations to parents; there is no evidence to shew that Jesus ever encouraged His followers to leave their aged parents unprovided for. Whatever "Leave the dead to bury their own dead" means, it does not mean that. There we must leave the matter for the present, only remarking that with the Pharisees the claim of the *institution* was put first, if we accept the testimony of this passage and of its parallel in Mark; with Jesus primacy is given rather to loyalty to a new *personal* relation.

The deeper meaning of the passage is, of course, unaffected by our conclusions, which can only be tentative at best, upon the exact interpretation of "corban." The life of man, Jesus declares, is not defiled, human nature not corrupted, by anything that finds its way into it from outside, not by anything God has made, but by what men have made of God's world, by the evil hidden in the minds of men. The old taboos are all to go—circumcision, Sabbaths, food laws—for all are concerned with the outsides of things and people; at best they are irrelevant, at worst actively harmful, for life is short, and they keep men absorbed and busy, while the mischief is spreading beneath the surface. So far Jesus has not shown Himself definitely anti-Judaistic. His ideal had been, we remember, not to destroy the old religion, but to transform it from within. Now there is a new tone, for He strikes at the root of it all. He undermined not the Old Testament, it is true, but the fabric which had been erected on its literal interpretation as an infallible and complete revelation. Take away the one sacred day, the one favoured sex, the one unalterable and final book, the one chosen people, and what is left of that old religion, old and yet so persistent? The Pharisee is reduced to the level of the common man indeed, if the bitter word, spoken when he is off his guard, is to brand him with a mark which all his carefully-cultivated morality cannot efface. Nothing really matters but a pure mind, says Jesus, and a pure mind is never the outcome of a conscientious avoidance of impurity, only of a great love which of itself washes it clean of all the nastiness

that collects there, all the corruption which sooner or later breaks out in speech and act, no matter how rigid a man's self-control, how habitual his discretion. To be born a member of a chosen people or a privileged sex, to be accustomed to the freedom from distraction which only the setting apart of one day in the week for devotion can secure, to have a book available which contains God's thoughts about man, and man's best thoughts about God, is not enough; all depends upon what a man makes of these things, and what he makes of them does not in the last resort depend upon them, but upon him. What men are is revealed not by what they read, not even so much by what they do or abstain from doing, as by what they say when no one in particular is listening; nor is anyone to be trusted with his tell-tale tongue, if his mind contains matter unfit for publication.

Only when an all-transforming love has swept him right away from the turbid and self-defiling channels of his wonted thoughts can man find good in Lord's day, Church, or code of ethics; though all are means of grace, yet when they become ends in themselves, they only serve to hold down and shut in what by and by finds some more dangerous outlet. Such a love must be love for a Person, not merely loyalty to an institution, book, or creed, for men mould the institution in the likeness of their own unregenerate hearts; they read themselves into book and creed. Love for a Person, realised first of all as outside themselves, gives them a living centre of interest which will not let itself be fashioned in their own image. Jesus, once and for all, puts Himself in the place of all the regula-

tions, restraints, and moralities, by which men had been managed so far, in so far as they had been managed at all. Love for someone else than Him does much to cleanse the mind and give it air and freedom from self-defilement, but no other love can quite take the place of love for Him, for we are all infected ; in Him the mind finds no obstruction, nothing to remind it of its own earthliness, or bring it back to the old suspicions and distrusts.

Even though they did not understand all that this doctrine was to mean to them, the disciples could not fail to notice its startling effect upon wiser heads than their own ; they report that the Pharisees—not the scribes only—have taken deep offence at His dogmatism, and they ask for further explanation. Jesus sadly answers that there is no profit in arguing with them any longer ; they are blind guides, for no one is so blind as they who will not see, and those who follow them will share their fate. The scribes, too, said that "an evil heart," or, as they more often called it, the "evil leaven," was the source of all corruption, but their only plan for its redemption was that of restraining its activities by discipline ; their treatment of Jesus proved only too clearly that the regularising of their outward life had left their minds as full of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness as ever.

Chapter V — *Other Sheep I Have*
(Chap. 15, 21–39)

THE severance of the new Church from Judaism in the narrower sense of the word is now complete, and it is fitting that the next step should be to prepare the ground for an appeal to a wider constituency. Our best plan will be to paraphrase the story that follows as it appears in what is, at least, a possible translation of the old Syriac version: "Jesus left that district and withdrew to the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon. As soon as He got there, a woman from that part of the world met Him, and with cries besought Him to listen to her. 'Take pity on me, Sir, Son of David,' she said, 'my daughter is terribly troubled by a demon.' But He had not a word to say to her, till at last the disciples came up with the request that He should tell her to go away, 'For,' said they, 'she is making a disturbance behind us.' He answered them, 'It is after these sheep, lost from Israel's fold, that I was sent.' Still she came on, and began to do obeisance to Him, saying, 'You might help me, Sir.' He said, 'You should not take the bread which the children throw to the puppies.' 'Yet, Sir,' she said, 'the puppy dogs under the table eat the food that falls from their masters, and manage to pick up a living.' Jesus said, 'Madam, I congratulate you on your faith; what you desire shall be done.'"

This version, it will be observed, turns the sense of the story the other way round. The saying "I was not sent" becomes a rebuke to the disciples, while the woman is encouraged to come right up, and fall at His feet; He does not hurry on, but walks more slowly so that she catches Him up. The second saying is apparently a current proverb occurring in the poet Phocylides, meaning "The life of a parasite who has to be content with scraps, contemptuously flung to him, is disgraceful." The saying is further illuminated by the fact that, in Gentile towns, children were called "puppies," as we call them "kiddies." In Syria to-day we are told little dogs are taken into the house as pets and the children play with them; when they grow older, the dogs are turned out to pick up their living in the streets. The woman thought that if Jesus could not bring Himself to help a Gentile dog, at least He might take pity on a child. In any case, she is quite content to play the parasite and get what she can on those terms, but He is not willing to leave the matter there. The Gentiles were no longer to make the best of such scraps as the children of the house had no use for; He had come to that part of the world specially for such as they; Matthew suggests that, whenever He saw a crowd He thought of straying sheep—"they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd"—and Galilee would set Him thinking of the lost ten tribes. He had come to Galilee precisely because it was "Galilee of the Gentiles"; He would be likely to meet on the lakeside men and women of other nations than His own. Now that work on the lake-

side is out of the question, He is free to concentrate upon those other sheep, in which, from the nature of the case, He must always have taken so lively an interest. The adventurous Gentile woman has now taken her place with Peter, the adventurous Jewish man; they, a Jew and a Gentile, a man and a woman, were the first to break down the barriers of convention, in order to come to Jesus.

Mark makes it clear that the next incident—the feeding of the four thousand—took place on the eastern side of the lake. It is incredible that Jesus after His disappointing experience with the five thousand, would have repeated the experiment with people from the western lakeside. But He is away from Galilee proper now, and the crowd which He proceeds to entertain comes from Decapolis, a district predominantly Gentile in population as in Government. Read in the light of this consideration, the story ceases to be a mere duplication of the other miraculous feeding, and takes a definite place in the development of the Master's strategy. The Gentile woman has taken her place beside Peter, the Galilean; now the Gentile crowd is offered the same sacramental fellowship as that which the Galileans had the other day enjoyed. The story of the supper is prefaced by a passage describing the rapture of the crowd at the healing of their sick; there is a kind of breathless music in the very words which shews that the evangelist's heart is in the record. This is a new departure indeed; people who had never met the Saviour before are being admitted wholesale into closest intimacy, and age-long barriers are falling

every minute of this exciting evening. When we realise the heathen character of the company, and that, before the supper began, they had enjoyed this exhilarating fellowship with Jesus for three days, we understand why Matthew tells us that "they glorified the God of Israel"; Israel and her God meant something quite different to these heathen people from the time when they met Israel's King. Jesus, not Paul, was the innovator. It is one thing to heal the child of a persistent Gentile woman, in a kind of exasperated pity; according to ideas universal in ancient religion, it is a very much more revolutionary proceeding to go out of one's way to eat and drink with a crowd of pagans, and, if there were Jews amongst them, that only makes the new fellowship more significant; it is an epoch-making adventure indeed.

THE first paragraph of Chapter 16 should read—we paraphrase as before—" The Pharisees and Sadducees approached Him then and, with the idea of embarrassing Him, asked Him to shew them a sign from Heaven by way of justifying His claim. All He said in reply to them was, ' You and the men of these evil degenerate days keep asking for what you call a sign ; the only sign to be given you is the sign Jonah gave to the Ninevites '—not forty days, but forty years." The rest of v. 2 and the whole of v. 3 are almost certainly not part of the original text ; at least, they do not belong here. The " sign from Heaven " demanded is, of course, the voice from the sky, which was supposed to be the proper guarantee of prophetic inspiration. Rev. J. H. Michael has made the suggestion that we should read " the sign of John " here ; if, as is very probably the case, " Jonah " has come in for " John " in v. 17, the same mistake may have happened twice. We have had " the sign of Jonah " referred to in 12, 39 ; this passage introduces an idea specially applicable to the association of Pharisees and Sadducees. They had been present together at John's baptism, according to our Gospel (3, 7), and then the sign from Heaven had been forthcoming, though they

had not eyes to see it; it is not to be repeated for the benefit of sceptics. The fact that the Sadducees are again working along with their opponents, the Pharisaic Rabbis, is of the most sinister importance; we have not met them in company since 3, 7. It means that an organised campaign, carried on by a coalition of usually hostile parties, is being conducted against Jesus. When once this troublesome free lance has been dealt with, they will be at leisure to take up their old quarrels again.

Jesus replies curtly, and then we have the pointed words, "And He left them and went away." Never again did He meet them until the last week, when they are at death-grips with Him. Then (22, 21) He does not leave them—it is a fight to the finish now—"*they* leave *Him* and go away." But just now He wants a breathing-space, so He breaks through the gathering circle of His foes, and warns His disciples against any kind of association with these people; they would come whispering round, we may be sure, and his listening to their insinuations had perhaps more to do with the treachery of Judas than we think. Rabbis and Sadducees alike are to be avoided in future; they have declared war upon Jesus, and there must be no further parley with them.

To escape His assailants, Jesus leaves Galilee behind Him once more, going to the sources of the Jordan; there He comes to the white rock, with grotto beneath and marble temple above, where the emperor was worshipped as God manifest in the flesh. There are no eavesdroppers here, for the place is sanctuary; neither Herod nor Pharisees can touch

them. He has leisure to dream of the Church to be; indeed it is in existence already, in the twelve men who had torn themselves away from home and synagogue to walk on the water of untried experiment with Him. He knows how far they have gone on the road of loyalty, but it will help them to put their thoughts into words. So He begins with the general question, "What do people call Me, who call Myself the Son of Man?" Only then does He ask them in so many words for their opinion. Peter is ready, for he had learned already by his experience on the water, that the challenges of Jesus are to be met fearlessly. "Thou art the Messiah," he says, "Son of the real God"—not the sham god they worship up there. "I congratulate you, Simon, Son of Jonah" (or "John"), Jesus answers; "this illumination has come to you from no merely human source, but direct from My Father God. I tell you now that you are indeed 'Rock' and upon rock-men like you I will build My Synagogue, the Church that is to be. Nor will the succession of rock-men ever die out. You, and such as you, shall be controllers of God's household; He shall ratify the law and discipline which you enforce."

If Simon Barjona—*i.e.*, "Son of Jonah"—is not a mistake, for "Bar-Johanan," "Son of John" (Jesus' pet name for Peter (John 1, 42; 21, 15–17)) it means perhaps "son of the dove." We remember the dove that flew out from the ark, and was the first to find a footing in the new world after the deluge; if this suggestion seems too fanciful, we can think of the dove which came down upon

Jesus at His baptism, and can render "son of the Spirit." This interpretation makes "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee" still more pointed. Jesus Himself is Son of the Spirit in "the Gospel of the Hebrews" ("just now," we read, "My mother the Holy Spirit, took Me by one of the hairs of My head and bore Me up on the great mountain Tabor;)" and less directly, in Luke 1, 35. The new Church is to be built, not on the wise and prudent, on learned Rabbi or scheming priest, but on the confession of baby minds like Peter's; not on the marble or the limestone, but on the bed-rock of humanity, the normally unexpressive average man and woman. It is important to notice that when Jesus begins the work of Church building, He uses the technical terms of ecclesiastical administration. The only difference—and it makes all the difference—lies in the fact that He puts the old powers into the hands of a new sort of man—not in Peter's alone, as in 18, 18 clearly shews; those who love Him well enough to confess Him are to be trusted with functions confined in the old Church to professional experts in religion. The power of excommunication can only be rightly exercised by the whole Church, though Peter and Paul may pass sentence. The rock on which the Church is built is "the blessed company of all faithful people."*

Jesus is now declared Christ by Peter, pioneer and

* The new Strack-Billerbeck commentary suggests that, translated back into Aramaic, the words of Jesus would read "I say unto thee, Peter, that on this rock (i.e., confession like Peter's) I will build my Church." If that is so, the Roman claim based upon this text, is finally disproved, but the exposition followed here is unaffected.

spokesman of the world's homage and the Church's confession. The evangelist in his careful way marks the highest point which the recognition of His claim reached in those days by slipping in the word "Christ" in his narrative; the word has not appeared since 1, 18. From this cairn we travel downhill all the way to the Cross, and the part of the Old Testament to which our attention is continually directed is no longer the 8th of Proverbs, but the 53rd of Isaiah. But if we are to feel the shame and the pity, as well as the glory of all that is to follow, we must carry the declarations of the 3rd section (11, 1-13, 53) along with us. He is the Lord of glory, the secret of the universe, the pre-existent Companion of God, the everlasting Lover of men; His love is our supreme discovery, His loss the one irreparable disaster in this world and the next;—and this is the best we can do with Him!

For the disciples the crisis which followed swiftly upon the great confession was memorable chiefly for a change which came over the Master they thought they knew so well. Up to this point the waning of His popularity has been more than made up for by the knowledge that they were being taken ever more closely into His confidence. They inferred from His refusal to become King simply that the time He had chosen had not come yet, that He had some master-stroke in reserve. But they were not prepared for the prophecy of the Cross. Indeed, how could they be? We must think ourselves clear of the associations called up by the word "Cross," if we are to do these men justice. Peter

was willing to walk on the water, ready for any romantic and exciting adventure, but there was nothing exhilarating about this! If their crusade was to end in such catastrophe, the whole thing was futile. As he looked into his Master's face He saw the shadows gathering there. Where did these new unnerving fancies come from? At last, in the name of all the disciples, he protests against this demoralising obsession; "you must not talk like this;" he says, "this can't happen to you"! Jesus turns upon his well-meaning friend with a sternness Peter had never seen in Him before. For the moment He is looking past Peter at a face which He had learned to recognise in those darker hours which He shares with us. "Out of my way, 'satan'!" He cries. Happily it is not necessary to think that Jesus called His loyal disciple "Satan"; if we write the word "satan," without the capital letter, the meaning is quite plain. That this was the way in which the evangelist himself understood the word is clear from the sentence which—in this Gospel alone—follows them: "You are My hindrance!" "Hindrance"—someone who gets in the way—is simply a translation of "satan," when not used as a personal name. But Peter is too deeply hurt to think of such subtleties; he drops back to a level with the others, and they follow, utterly dispirited, too loyal to leave Him, yet with a new sense of separation which makes their footsteps drag. They were all of the same mind; Peter was only the spokesman now, as he had been before. The promise of the Resurrection only added to their

bewilderment. They all believed in a resurrection, but not "in a day or two."

According to Mark and Luke, Jesus at once made an effort to rally all His friends; Matthew mentions only the disciples. Then comes the challenge straight and clear: "Now you know what it is going to mean to follow Me." We had better paraphrase a little at this point. "Here is your choice; the man who is bent upon saving himself shall lose all that makes life worth living; he who has forfeited what men call life shall make himself eternally secure. What good is it to a man in the long run to possess all that the world can give, if he cannot call his soul his own? If he sells his soul for profit, what sum do you think is going to buy it back again? That is what failure to follow now will mean, for the Son of Man will soon be coming, attended by His holy angels, and radiant in His Father's glory. *Then will every man's destiny be determined by his dealings with Him now.* I tell you truly, there are some of you standing here who shall live to see *the Son of Man coming again to exercise His world-wide sway.* The words in italics are found in this gospel only. With Matthew Jesus is always central; Mark has, in the last sentence, "the Kingdom of God fully come with power," Luke, "the Kingdom of God." With Matthew, Jesus is the Kingdom; not even the Kingdom can take rank with the King.

Chapter VII *The Shadow of the Cross not all Dark*

(Chap. 17, 1–13)

EACH of the Synoptic gospels tells the Transfiguration story; Mark's account is the most vivid, Luke's the most subtle, Matthew's the most majestic. Mark describes the glory of the Master in homely phrase: "His garments became shining, very white, as no laundryman on earth could bleach them." Luke is thinking of the Passion: "The look of His face became different, and His clothing flashed out white." Matthew—following the reading "snow" for "light"—has the noble sentence, "His face shone like the sun, and His garments were white as the snow"—the mountain snow with the morning sun upon it! Mark makes Peter say something, because he does not know what to say; Luke says he spoke, but did not know what he was saying. Matthew leaves this phrase out, but suggests an unaccustomed diffidence in Peter: "Lord, if Thou wilt"—he is noticeably shy after the rebuke the other day.

In Matthew the cloud which sweeps across the summit while Peter is talking is a "shining" cloud; in Luke all that we are told is that "they felt afraid, as they entered into the cloud"—its shadow is chill; it carries with it the suggestion of the one bleak and dreadful day and the two bitter nights, when Jesus was to be parted from His friends in

deadly earnest. In Matthew it is the Voice from Heaven which makes them afraid; this is the first time that they have heard it, for the Voice at the Baptism had been for the ears of Jesus only. Now the "sign from Heaven" asked for so repeatedly on the plains below had come. Peter's first sensation is one of overwhelming relief. Here at last was the Jesus of his dreams, the great Leader he had known so well in the days when he first learned to follow Him—Jesus where He ought to be—on the throne! If only he may gaze a little longer, Peter will make three shelters from the branches of the trees for the Master with His two great companions, and they will be only too glad to lie out in the snow, to watch and wonder. The cloud parts him from Jesus as he speaks—it always did, when he tried to push the picture of the Cross away—the mysterious voice sounds out away up in the mist, and wonder changes swiftly into fear.

Luke suggests, it will be remembered, that the disciples were afraid, because they felt even on the mountain-top the shadow of a coming parting upon them. Matthew does not mention the topic upon which Jesus conversed with Moses and Elijah, but he implies that the cloud was meant to temper the glory in the face of Jesus, *when His Father spoke directly to Him*, to their earthbound eyes. Both Moses and Elijah had disappeared mysteriously among those eastern hills which run up to Hermon. Their spirits were supposed to haunt their summits; and, as Peter and the others had probably never been up there before, it is no wonder that they saw, or

thought they saw, them. From our evangelist's point of view, however, the significant thing is that Moses and Elijah fade out of the picture, and Peter, James and John are left with "Jesus only." The old Church, with its historic figures, representing in their own persons the law and the prophets, is passing; the new Israel, founded not upon those who were great in their own right and by their own achievement, but upon men whose only title to greatness is their love for Jesus, has come to stay. Jesus seems greatest to us, not when He is seen in His moment of native but unearthly glory on the mountain-top, but when He moves downhill into the shadow of the Cross, listening patiently to the chatter of His companions, answering their uncomprehending questions. Knowing by His quick instinct that their first ecstasy of wonder at *their* being permitted to look on at such a scene is passing into an uneasy sense that they were not in the picture, indeed were in the way, He comes up to them and touches them, as they lie there, as if to say, "After all, I belong to you." One of the many exquisite touches of our evangelist's artistry may be noticed here. A word is deliberately used in this *one* place of the Master's coming up to His disciples, which everywhere else is kept for men's reverent and guarded approach to Him: "*He drew near* and touched them." His face shone for a moment, because for the first time, since He came amongst us, He could talk freely about the redeeming work which was His glory without fear of being misunderstood, but it was only for a moment. As

Mr. G. S. Lee has said, "An absent-minded transfiguration, with Peter, James and John left out, was never to the taste of Jesus." He gave "the password of the great," and came back to us, though coming back meant the Cross.

At first sight it looks as if vv. 11 and 12 imply two comings of Elijah, as Schweitzer suggests. But we should translate, with Moffatt, "Elijah to come, and restore all things? Nay, I tell you, Elijah has already come." Elijah was to come, according to Jewish expectation, twice, first to prepare the way for the Messiah, then to anoint Him and attend upon Him when he came. He had come, Jesus explained, in the person of John, but had not stayed to wait upon the Messiah, because his generation had worked its wicked will upon him, as it would do upon his Successor presently. The old Church had played its part; its consummation had been reached in John, greatest of the prophets. Now the new age has dawned, and they must learn to look forward, and play their part in its unfolding bravely.

MATTHEW abbreviates the story of the healing of the epileptic boy considerably, only emphasising one or two points ; for instance, while Mark reports that Jesus attributed the failure of the nine disciples to their prayerlessness, Matthew makes Him refer to their " little faith." At this point also he introduces a saying about " faith like a single mustard-seed," which he inserts again at 21, 21. There he is parallel with Mark. Luke, on the other hand, records a saying about faith, like mustard seed, used, not to remove " this mountain," but to transplant " this fig-tree " (17, 6). " Mountain " and " fig-tree " might stand as alternative symbols of Judaism, since both words had come to be used for Jerusalem. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Jesus did regard His own easy mastery of material objects as possible to us ; if we had faith of the right quality, as pungent and assertive as the mustard-seed, we could toss mountains about as cavalierly as He scolded the winds and waves on the lake. As a matter of fact, man's persevering and restless faith has been doing that kind of thing ever since. We who have lived to see physical barriers of every kind waived aside with almost insolent disdain should be the last people in the world to dismiss

these startling prophecies of Jesus as mere hyperbole. We can deal with barriers of time and space very much more effectively than we can deal with differences of temperament; if we could annihilate hatred as easily as we can annihilate distance, the Kingdom of God would come.

In the application of the great mountain-saying to this particular incident, we have a signal example of our evangelist's genius, as also of his respectful treatment of his authorities. In his copy of Mark he finds the saying appended to the story of the cursing of the fig tree, and he does not care to displace it from that context. But he has found a better place for it and he puts it in here as well. His selection is perfectly delightful, and we can scarcely doubt that he at least has moved the mountain to the right place. Let us imagine the case of the nine bewildered disciples; they have an agonising morning. Everything is out of joint because Jesus is away over the mountain somewhere. They fumble the case, and the father of the boy gets more hysterical as the morning goes on. They take turns in feeble attempts to pacify him, while the others are watching the mountain-side, until, as the hours of that interminable day drag their slow length along, the mountain barrier becomes an obsession; they can see nothing except that exasperating mountain slope which parted them from Jesus. At last He comes, works the required miracle, then turns to His distraught disciples. "If you had faith, like a single mustard-seed," He says, "you might have said to this mountain, which loomed so large upon you all this morning, 'Be thou removed,'

and it would have obeyed you." In other words, faith can annihilate space and time, break down all barriers that stand, within us or without us, between us and our absent Master.

Here, as everywhere in this Gospel, Jesus is central. It was when He was away that the touch of the disciples faltered and failed. The shadow of the Cross had crept into their souls, and their hold of Him had grown insecure. It was not simply that, for the moment, the Master is on the mountain and they are on the plain : He is living in one world, and they in another. Only when our fellowship with Jesus is unbroken and safe can we remove mountains of difficulty and unbelief. Faith of the right quality—the faith that the omnipotence of God is friendly to our feeble efforts to serve Him and each other, and in Christ is altogether at our disposal—will remove everything that parts Jesus from us and bring Him in a moment to our help.

After a prophecy, more explicit than ever, of the Passion, there follows an intriguing story about which needless difficulties have been raised. There is no need whatever to think of a miracle here ; it is much more likely, as the author of " Philochristus " long ago suggested, that we have to do with a fisherman's proverb. An expert fisherman, like Peter, always knows where to put his hand on a few shillings, when he wants them, especially when the lake he knows from end to end is well supplied with fish. The " Arabian Nights Entertainments " give us the atmosphere in which this lively story should be read. How many of them are concerned with tales of

unexpected catches! Fishermen's yarns have been proverbial ever since men learned to use hook and line. Peter had already been called to become a "man-fisher," and just as the fisherman never knows his luck, so with the man-fisher. Jesus has shewn us the way. "Take the first fish that comes up"—any man or woman that comes along and is willing to bite—no matter how queer a fish he or she may be—and if you are a fisher of men, like Jesus, you will induce him to "open his mouth," as Jesus did so successfully with the woman of Samaria; you will get him talking and then you will begin to make discoveries; sterling coin, with the image of the King stamped upon it, is there, if you know where to look for it.

A subscription for the Temple was required, and there was no money in the common purse. Jesus asks Peter whether he thinks there is any real obligation to pay. They were sons of the God who had so far used the Temple as His house, they were heirs of all for which the Temple had come to stand, they were living temples themselves, soon to take the place of the building made with hands. Strictly speaking, they should not be called upon to pay for the upkeep of a fabric of dead stone so rapidly going out of date. But they will do well not to assert their immunity too obtrusively; the process of time will make it clear, and meanwhile the old Church and the new have still some years to live through side by side; needless offence must be avoided. In Tatian's harmony a very interesting version of this story was given; it shews traces of Marcionite origin, but may

have some truth behind it. According to this rendering, Peter is to pay because the Master he serves is a "stranger" to the Jews. A new start is being made and all connexions must be cut. Precisely because Jesus was a foreigner living in Palestine, a Son of the God of love, with whom the Jews had nothing to do, Jesus pays the tax. On the whole, we should be justly suspicious of so strongly anti-Judaistic a reading; all the same, even the recognised text bears the same implication. Jesus no longer classes Himself or His disciples with the Jewish nation. Whether they are "sons" or "strangers," at any rate they are on a different footing. It is like Him to refuse to make capital out of a liberty which He takes for granted, leaving it to history to shew how free those who followed Him were and we are.

Chapter IX — *The Little Ones* (Chap. 18, 1–9)

THE one condition of entrance into the new fellowship is that a man shall have learnt to think humbly about himself; the only thing that can keep us out that we should feel ourselves superior and secure. But to be humble is not to think meanly about ourselves; a little child takes love for granted, "receives" it, without self-importance or self-despising. He never thinks about his dignity, or that he demeans himself by continually receiving. Those are likely candidates for a place in the new Church, to whom the great gift of the love of God in Jesus comes as a surprise which never loses its freshness, yet has always to be taken for granted, for it is always too good to be true.

But we are sophisticated creatures and to tell us that we must become like little children again seems mere mockery. Another answer to this perennial difficulty will be forthcoming in the sequel, but meanwhile the next verse makes a practical suggestion. We cannot go back over the years; indeed the affectation of childlikeness is always tiresome. The little child makes no claim to independent rights and dignities, but he is exceedingly sensitive. It will help us to keep our temperaments in order, if we keep a little child as a kind of domestic recording angel; to

"receive" such a little one into your home is to entertain Jesus, for what hurts the child grieves Him. As we learn to love the child—we cannot avoid doing that—we shall begin to hate quarrelling and letting ourselves go generally, not so much because we know it will worry us afterwards—the fear of the morning after does not prevent men getting drunk—but because nothing makes the child in the house more quickly unhappy. He feels instinctively any tension between the grown-ups, and broods over it in secret. So the saying about the danger of becoming the kind of man or woman who is not fit company for a child is justified; the man who cannot be trusted to be left alone with a child can never be fit company for Jesus. All the warnings that psychologists give us about the effect of early impressions in after-life only lend added emphasis to a saying which has haunted me ever since I first read the gospels.

The First Gospel is the children's charter, but it belongs to all immature people old and young. The passage which we are discussing passes from the subject of those who are children in years to children of a larger growth in v. 6: "one of these little people who believe *in Me*"—the words in italics are peculiar to this gospel; Mark 9, 42 might mean simply "one of these trustful little people." The Church is full, and always will be full, of men and women about whom the only thing that we can say is that they do believe in Jesus; they have much to learn in all kinds of ways, and they are often provokingly childish and narrow. It is our business to help them to broaden

their minds, but we must be careful how we set about it. If we find pleasure in making them "sit up," we are in danger of involving ourselves in the doom described in this intimidating saying. We need not, perhaps, be so scrupulous about the feelings of the heresy-hunter, who would make everyone conform to his own position, on pain of the worst suspicions. But when those who come to us are people whose minds a doubt never seems to have crossed, we cannot be too careful. Real heresy is a matter of demeanour; granted loyalty to our Lord as Master supreme, there is no heresy that need trouble us except the heresy of those who speak scornfully of the faith of simple people. There is a deepening note of sombre warning in the three gospels as we take them in the probable order of their publication, Mark, Luke, Matthew; Mark has "thrown in the sea," Luke "flung into the sea," Matthew "sunk in the deep sea"; the only other place where the haunting word "sink" is used in the New Testament occurs also in the First Gospel, of Peter's walking on the water: "and beginning to feel himself sinking, he cried, saying, 'Lord save me!'" When we undertake the care of such easily hurt souls as the little ones of Jesus, we are indeed walking on the water; He encourages us to try, but, unless He is at hand to lift us up and give us a wiser gentleness than tact, we shall be in danger of incurring the sentence which He passes here upon all meddling wiseacres: "Better *for him* that he were drowned and out of the way of further mischief." The proverb "Little pitchers have sharp ears"

does not apply to children only; we must not let our impatience get the better of us or give our vein of sarcasm free play in the hearing of people who, however stupid and unimaginative, are still the little ones of Jesus.

In the new fellowship it will not always be easy to live together. For a long time we shall have to be very careful of each other's feelings, for the Church is a hospital, inhabited not by good people, but by people who are getting better; convalescents are often irritable, and it is not well to let off steam too freely in a hospital ward. We feel sometimes that these grown-up children ought by this time to have learnt more sense; they ought not to take offence so easily. One safeguard against the danger of allowing our natural impatience with them to get the better of us is to face continually the precariousness of our own virtue. Hindrances are bound to come in a world in which men of all degrees of spiritual attainment have somehow to live and work together; and in the Church temperaments are more likely to clash because its members are not taking the easy way, either with themselves or one another. "If the things you are always doing or the places to which you have got into the habit of going are your hindrances"—make you unfit to live with the others in that most difficult, because most intimate association, Christian fellowship—"cut off hand and foot, if need be, rather than become a slave to either; better be a cripple all your days and have a share in the only life worth living, than with all your bodily powers about you to be cast into the fire that is always burning. If some-

thing which has become as much a part of you as the eyes in your head is your hindrance, be rid of it, however much it hurts you ; better lose one of your eyes and call your soul your own rather than to be flung into the fire of hell." Not till the Kingdom has come shall we ever be really free with each other or easy with ourselves. Jesus knew what He was talking about, for He suffered from all the frictions incident to companionship with men who could never quite understand Him ; He, too, had to restrain and deny Himself, and live a life which to anyone but Him, endowed with powers like His, would have seemed one long failure. "It is enough for the disciple that He should be as his Teacher, for the slave to go through it with his Master."

Chapter X — *The Difficult Brother*

(Chap. 18, 10–35)

THE verse about the "angels" of the "little ones" may be taken in various ways; they may be thought of as standing for the prayers of children and simple believers generally, imagined, in accordance with the Jewish idea of interceding angels, as always having access into God's presence. The interpretation which, upon the whole, seems to suit the sequence of thought best is to the effect that the angels are the representatives of little, weak, easily-offended people who stand in the presence of the King—that is, God's purpose for them, the picture of what He intends them to become; "in Thy book were all my members written." God has a special care for them, says Jesus; if they can fall, and often do fall, lower than the safe man who can be trusted to look after himself, they can also rise much higher. Indeed, any man with human feeling about him, thinks oftener, if he does not care more for it, of a sheep which cannot be left to itself than of the rest who have never been known to go far wrong, at least not in that kind of way. Our instinctive interest in the black sheep of the family is one of those prejudices which are ineradicable because we are made in the image of God. Once again we see how Jesus, when He talks of the love of God, always appeals to

the humanity which we share with Him. "What would a *man* do in a case like this?" is the question He invariably asks.

In Luke's version of the parable of the lost sheep emphasis is laid upon persistence in search, in Matthew's upon surprise in discovery. Jesus was for ever seeking the lost; but He often found them where He least expected to find them—Roman soldiers, Gentile women, sheep lost from Israel's fold—men who had sold their souls, and women who had sold their bodies for money—the unlikeliest people in the world. His "via dolorosa" was gladdened every now and again by surprising discoveries of the treasure He had come into the world to find in unexpected places. "Who did the will of his Father? The last." "Jesus was amazed and said, 'I have not found faith so great; no, not in Israel.'" It is all summed up in the great sentence, most inadequately translated in our version (18, 14), "So your Heavenly Father's face is set against one of these little ones being lost."

Now that we have got our perspective right, we can interpret the passage which follows, about the brother who misconducts himself. We should, with the Revised Version, drop out the words "against thee" in v. 15; it is Peter who uses them when he refers to the subject (v. 21). Your brother has fallen; what are you to do about it? He is one of those easily-misled people of whom we have been thinking; the other sort do not generally get into the kind of trouble which becomes the concern of the whole fellowship. Try a personal

interview first, your motive being, not so much to set him right, as to restore the relationship which his conduct threatens. Your chance of success will depend upon the amount of real friendliness and unpatronising interest in him you have shown *before* he became a problem. We are apt not to get very much excited about one another until something untoward happens to give someone in the Church a factitious interest. He must be your "brother"; you must not feel brotherly for the first time, when he rouses your pity by going wrong. The same word is used of "gaining" your brother, as is employed in the parable of the talents for "making" money; the believer should have a zest for adventurous friendships. We are all brothers, but we are not all friends. We are brothers as being children of the same Father, but to be somebody's friend means that there is a special tie between ourselves and some other member of the fellowship, a particular relation not shared by the others. Jesus loved all His disciples; all the same, there was a disciple whom He, in a special sense, "loved." Christian fellowship would be an inhuman thing if it excluded the possibility of wheels within wheels.

Jesus, the son of Sirach, said, "Reprove a friend; it may be, he did it not, and, if he has done something, that he may do it no more. Reprove thy neighbour; it may be he said it not, and, if he hath said it, that he may say it no more. Reprove a friend, for often there is slander, and trust not every *word*" (Ecclesiasticus 19, 12 ff.). A still nearer parallel can be found in the "Testaments of the

Twelve Patriarchs" (Test. Gad 6, 3): "If a man sin against thee, cast forth the poison of hatred and speak peaceably to him . . . . and, if he confess and repent, forgive him . . . . but, if he deny it, do not get into a passion with him, lest catching the poison from thee, he take to swearing, and so sin doubly . . . . And though he deny it, and yet have a sense of shame, give over reproving him . . . . And if he be shameless and persist in his wrong-doing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging." This passage, though from a non-Christian book, breathes the very spirit of Christianity. The only difference in our text is that Jesus advocates rather a constructive friendliness than a mere refusal to quarrel. As He, out of men's bitter hatred of Him and His own indignation against their disloyalty to God and inhumanity to man has wrought the redemption which our sin had made impossible, so we are to set ourselves out of every conceivable scandal in Church life to produce some good by the magic of Christian forbearance and ingenuity, to such purpose that the time may come when we shall be glad that the ugly thing happened. From our very contentions good may come, if we can be taught the secret of turning them to the profit of our understanding of each other. How many lifelong friendships have begun in some squalid dispute!

If the private interview does not settle the matter, the next step is to try the group. A small circle is a more efficient instrument for the checking of facts than either one person carrying on an investi-

gation alone, or a crowd; in this way every detail of the story may be tested. Only when these two methods have failed to bring about a settlement must the Church intervene; in the last resort it is the business of the whole fellowship—for only the Church as a whole has the right of excommunication. If excommunication is necessary, that only turns the brother concerned into one of the lost sheep, for whose rescue and recovery the Father is so eager, and we are to imitate God in concentrating upon him, leaving the ninety-nine who are still in the fold, to seek the brother who has wandered away. At this point I am going to yield to temptation, and adopt a reading which I frankly confess may be explained as simply a mistake; but some slips are inspired, and, if ever there was a case of such a happy accident, this is one. The Western text reads in v. 18, "whatever you shall bind on earth shall be loosed in Heaven," which may be translated, "God has a solution of the problems that are insoluble from the human point of view." Remember the case is not hopeless, because you have to give it up. Even when you can do nothing else, you can pray, but do not pray alone. When anything that concerns a third person is the subject of your intercession, the group-prayer is best. The phrase "a prayer meeting" suggests, though it does not always actually involve, a crowd. These intimate matters are not suitable for a prayer meeting; for their settlement two is a quorum, because two always means three before long, and three is the perfect number. Get someone who loves him and you to

pray with you, and your anxiety for the subject of your common prayer and your love for each other puts into God's hands a power which can do everything but force the submission of the man for whom you are praying.

Here we may add the unwritten saying from Oxyrhynchus: "Where one of you is alone, see! I am with him," and that makes two! It continues, "Raise the stone, and you shall find me: cleave the wood and there am I." Again, two shades off into three, "for My Father and I will come unto him, and make our abode with him." If our interpretation of the passage, taken as a whole, is right, the text about the "two or three" does not refer to Christian meetings in general, and should not be regarded merely as a convenient promise to quote on those innumerable occasions when the attendance is disappointing; but to the coming together of two lovers of their Lord, of each other, and of the brother concerned, to pray for the recovery of one of the lost sheep. Out of the very problems these difficult people present us we may make capital, we may create a new friendship. Even if we do not do that, the presence of Jesus will be realised in a new way, and that in itself compensates for all the disappointment, the sense of futility, too often involved in our attempts to help one another. But our motive must be, not the adding of another scalp to our collection, but the desire to make a friend and win a brother. If there is no like-minded person whom you can ask to pray with you, Christ Himself will make the necessary second; the lonely pioneer missionary and path-

finder, as He " raises the stone " to build the Church or makes a road through the jungle of heathenism for the coming of the King, will find the fellowship he needs in the Other One who will never be wanting.

It is probable, however, that you will find your real difficulty not with the man you are trying to save, but with yourself. We set out to rescue other people, and discover that we need rescuing ourselves ; sooner or later, we find ourselves alone, up against the stone of our own difficult temperament, seeking vainly to find a way through the jungle of our own tangled motives. The promise comes to us then ; face the facts about yourself that your well-meaning attempt to help somebody else has exposed to you, and He will make Himself known and find a way through for you. We are to bear one another's burdens, and He will carry ours.

Peter has not been listening to this, for his mind is busy with the repeated offences of a particular brother against himself. Perhaps Judas, jealous of the favour shewn to the Galilean, who had been promised the reversion of his office—" I will give unto *thee* the keys of the Kingdom "—has been revenging himself upon his successor behind his Master's back, and Peter's patience is exhausted. Jesus tells him that, if the fellowship is to hold together, they must be endlessly forbearing with one another. " Seventy-seven times " (the preferable reading) is a clear reminiscence of the " Song of Lamech " (Gen. 4, 24), the substance of which is, " If anybody hits me, I'll hit him back, and a great deal harder "—" If Cain shall be avenged seven times, truly Lamech seventy

and seven times." Only when we recognise that our little debts to one another are as nothing in comparison with our overwhelming debt to our common Master can we be expected to forgive one another as we must. The extraordinarily decisive parable that follows and enshrines this putting of the case needs no comment.

We have now reached the end of the fourth section of this gospel, and can pause to survey the ground that we have covered. Jesus is the ideal Teacher, greater than Moses (5, 1–7, 28); Captain and Saviour, the second and greater Joshua (8, 1–11, 1); He is the pre-existent Wisdom and Word of God incarnate, greater than Solomon, Wisdom's older representative (11, 2–13, 53); He is the Founder of a New and greater Israel, and is rejected by the Old (13, 54–19, 1). It will be seen that we have passed four of the milestones enumerated in the last verses of the gospel (28, 19, 20); there remains the last one "to the consummation of the world's history"

Book V

Chapter I *The Charter of the Disfranchised*

(Chap. 19, 1–15)

THE last of Matthew's five sections opens quietly, but it strikes the note which is to be dominant in it at once. The note is sounded in the testimony (21, 42) which comes almost exactly half-way through the section : " the Stone which the builders set at nought is become the headstone of the corner." This is to be the section of surprising reversals ; the first is to become last, and the last first, for the coming of Jesus turns everything upside down. He, the First, becomes last, that we, the last, may be first ; by becoming last, He has come to be First with men, as He was First with God. Every incident recorded in this section is harmonised with this note of surprise. He came to " save His people from their sins," and the result of His coming was that the nation He came to save was doomed to be cast out of the Kingdom, of which they were the natural heirs, that " the King was angry, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city." Out of the coming of the King of peace, of the true Light into the world, humanity by its amazing perversity made what we see in the Passion story, war to the knife, murder most foul, and a darkness that can be felt even in the pages of a book. And yet again out of man's self-chosen doom God by the

magic of His grace has brought salvation from murder, a hope won by despair.

The section begins with the declaration that three classes of people, disfranchised in the old Church, are to have at least a place equal to that occupied by others in the new; they are married women, unmarried people, and little children. In regard to the first of these three classes, perhaps it will not be necessary to discuss the question of divorce, as it has already been dealt with at length in the "Realism of Jesus." But a rather technical detail of exposition ought to be mentioned here. Readers of the former volume will perhaps remember that a suggestion was there somewhat tentatively accepted, to the effect that the phrase translated in our versions "saving for the cause of fornication" (5, 32) should rather be rendered "leaving on one side the word (in Deut. 24, 1) about pre-nuptial misconduct." If this is the true interpretation of a difficult expression, Matthew is more precise than Mark in his statement that Jesus disallowed divorce for believers on any ground whatever. The difficulty is that in our present passage (19, 9) the corresponding words are not capable of the suggested translation; they are simply "not for fornication," and look like an abbreviation of the more intelligible formula in 5, 32. If they are that, the form of the abbreviation seems to imply that the similar parenthesis in 5, 32 was taken to mean that divorce on the ground of misconduct, either before or after marriage, is allowed. The question is a difficult one, but the fact that the parenthesis here is barely grammatical attracts me to the view that the words are a gloss

intended to harmonise this passage with 5, 32, added by a scribe who took the earlier passage to mean "except in a case of misconduct." The fact that one group of MSS. omits them altogether, while another repeats the formula of 5, 32, rather confirms me in this view. A more serious matter is that, if we agree that, whatever be the meaning of this particular phrase in Matthew, the evidence goes to shew that Jesus disallowed divorce to believers *for any reason*, many loyal Christian people are inclined to resent such sweeping pronouncements as cruel, and unlike Jesus in their rigour. If He disallowed *separation*, the charge of cruelty might be justified; but separation is not forbidden, only the formation of a new tie of the same nature in the lifetime of the original partner. The rigidity remains, but there is no ground for the charge of cruelty.

Both sexes, in any case, are placed on an equal level of privilege and responsibility, and Jesus, as was His wont, appeals in support of this position, not to any theory, but to the facts of human nature; it was so "from the beginning." For proof of sex-equality, we should not have appealed to the creation-story; upon the surface, at least, it seems to bear another construction. The "tradition" that woman was made from a rib of man is studiously ignored; the essential fact that God made man and woman distinct and equal personalities, yet finding the fullest self-realisation when they come together and become one, is all that matters to Jesus. It is otherwise in Paul, if 1 Tim. 2, 13 is really Paul; let us hope, for Paul's sake, that it is not.

The disciples are staggered by this pronouncement, and their bewilderment finds expression in a naïve suggestion: "if that is the case of the man with the woman, it is best not to get married at all." Here, if anywhere, a case might be made out for the priority of Matthew as compared with Mark. The usually accepted critical theory is to the effect that the saying in Matt. 5, 32 comes from a collection of sayings of Jesus, known to scholars as Q, and corresponds to Luke 16, 16, while the passage under present consideration is taken from Mark. But if we had Matt. 19, 1–10 and Mark 10, 1–12 side by side, quite apart from other evidence, I should not hesitate in my judgment that Matthew's account was the more primitive; the attitude of the disciples is most natural, and the whole record very lively. The general balance of the evidence is still, however, on the side of the earlier date of Mark's gospel; impressions of this kind are not weighty enough to turn the scale.

There follows what we may fairly call the final word about the relative merits of married and single life. Jesus takes it for granted, as Paul never could quite wholeheartedly do, that, for Christian men and women, marriage is the normal God-appointed state. There is no trace of "It is better to marry than to burn." Underlying Paul's teaching is the implied opinion that the celibate life is the loftier and purer, though he is frank enough to tell us that here he has no word of the Lord to support him. Half-apologetically he says "I think I have the mind of Christ," as if he were not quite so sure

about it as usual. On the other hand, the underlying assumption in the saying of Jesus is that, for normally-placed and gifted men and women, the married state is more ideal, as being more completely charged with personal meaning. Paul makes special allowance for people who must marry, Jesus for people who must remain unmarried.

There are three kinds of men and women, says Jesus, for whom celibacy is a necessity. Some must remain single because of physical debility, others in consequence of unfortunate circumstance, others because of the nature of their vocation. Under the Mosaic law, to be unmarried for any reason was to be *ipso facto* incapable of the highest spiritual functions (Deut. 23, 1) and to be childless was a "reproach in Israel." That a reaction had set in against the injustice of such distinctions is clear from such passages as Isa. 56, 4, 5 and Wisdom 3, 13, 14; but the general feeling of Judaism on this question has always been the same. Jesus takes a middle position. Those who for any of the reasons mentioned cannot or must not marry are not thereby disqualified for any function in the Kingdom; at the same time, their way of life is not for that reason saintlier. Compensations for the enforced incompleteness of their experience will be given them, but these compensations do not elevate them to a higher grade of Christian living. Neither the married nor the celibate condition is a vocation in itself; but some men and women are called, like Jeremiah, to remain single in consequence of the nature of their vocation. In this respect the Roman

Catholic Church is less catholic than her Master. It is a relief to break away from the evasion of personal responsibilities characteristic of too much Christian thinking, to our Lord's own acceptance of life in its material, as in its spiritual, relations, as all coming from God and taking us back to Him.

Little need be said about the third of the three classes now fully enfranchised. Lest a shadow of doubt should remain as to whether Jesus really does approve of married life, Matthew follows Mark in inserting at this point His blessing of little children. The only features peculiar to this gospel in the story are the addition of the words "and pray" in v. 13, the omission of emphasis upon the anger of Jesus in v. 14, and a characteristic change, also in v. 14, in the order of the words; for "Allow the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them" he has "Leave the children alone, and do not hinder them *coming to Me.*" The evangelist has emphasised the phrase "Come unto Me," which means so much to him, by bringing it out to the end of the sentence. There are always some who belong to Jesus by the gift of a happy temperament, and who need never be parted from Him. The only other people who come to Jesus with perfect ease and homeliness are the outcast publicans; all others, except the publicans and the children, *approach* Him guardedly.

Chapter II — *Last Come, First Served*

(Chap. 19, 16–20, 16)

If publicans and children alike were wonderfully at home in the society of Jesus, the reason must be that, unlike as they were in every other respect, they were alike in the fact that they were far more free than most other people from the vice of self-importance. The young man who next appears on the scene fails to qualify chiefly because he could not wrench himself away from his "stake in the country." Matthew does not tell us that he was a magistrate—Luke is responsible for this piece of information—but it is clear in his record, as in the others, that the young man thought he was conferring honour upon this peasant-teacher by asking His advice. At the same time, he was pathetically eager, and something about him called forth the affection of Jesus at once. Again, Matthew does not mention this; perhaps he did not care to think that Jesus had special favourites. But it is worth mentioning that this young "ruler" is one of the three men whom Jesus is said to have "loved"; the other two are Lazarus and the anonymous writer of the Fourth Gospel. Perhaps all three were the same person; but we must not follow this tempting by-path.

It will be well to dispose of a difficulty that meets us on the threshold of Matthew's account of this

incident at once. Instead of "Good Teacher" . . . . "Why callest thou Me good?" as in Mark and Luke, Matthew has "Teacher, what *good thing* shall I do" . . . . "Why askest thou Me about the good *thing*"? It seems clear that the first evangelist has altered the form both of the young man's question and of Jesus' reply, because he was shocked at the apparent suggestion that there could be any question of the perfect goodness of his Master. It is characteristic of him that he should betray his uneasiness about such passages as these when he meets them in Mark by trying to make sense out of another interpretation of the words. It is possible to find a meaning in the words "Why askest thou Me about the good thing?" by emphasising the word "*thing*." The young man asks "What good *thing* shall I do?" Jesus answers "Why put the question in that form?" There is no good, as there is no evil, in the world apart from persons; the very term "good" as applied to a *thing*, considered by itself, is unmeaning. "God alone is good; you must apply to Him." This may be true, but it is rather subtle, and its connexion with the context cannot be called obvious. The motive for the change is so clear that we must decide against the First Gospel here. That the difficulty suggested by the question as recorded by Mark and Luke was acutely felt so early as the writing of this Gospel gives fresh support to the argument that the essential features of Mark's account must be historical. A disturbing hint of possible doubt about the moral perfection of Jesus could not have found its way into a record designed

to shew that He was the Son of God, unless this was how the incident really happened. When we find a mark of interrogation in the primitive text of a Gospel, written at latest before the end of the first century, we are confirmed in our conviction that such passages as these in Mark are pillars of our faith; they at least must be genuine, and they support the framework of the larger context from which they cannot be detached.

The special contribution made by our evangelist to our understanding of this story is to be found in a delicate play upon words later on. The young man says "What lack I yet?" In Mark and Luke Jesus says to him "One thing thou lackest." The man felt that he only needed to be "finished," that in a sentence or two Jesus could give him his last lesson. "The *youngster* said"—the word translated "youngster" is peculiar to Matthew here—"All this I learned long ago. What is there more for me to do?" Jesus said to him "If you want really to be grown up"—to complete your education—"go home, sell your possessions." This man was so young, yet not young enough to come in on the child-footing; he felt himself so old, he took himself so seriously, yet was not old enough to pay the price of winning manhood; he was neither one thing nor the other.

The disciples are amazed at the severity of the terms offered to a candidate who would be well able to help them at the crisis of their fate in Jerusalem, but Jesus goes on to discuss the incident, not from their point of view, but from the young man's. How glad they

should be that they had not so much to leave! Peter is not much interested in rich people, and protests at once that he and the others had left something after all; not as much as this young man had to surrender, perhaps, but at least all they had. Lest we should be unfair to Peter, we ought to notice that he includes the others; when, in the last chapter (18, 21), he was discussing duties, rather than rights, he had said "I"; now it is "we." Jesus replies at once with the assurance that their real and splendid devotion will not be forgotten; least of all in the consummation for which He and they have suffered together. There is no doubt about the authenticity of the saying about the "twelve thrones," for Luke also has it, though in a different connexion. It must mean that the destiny of Israel as a nation would finally be decided by their acceptance or rejection of the message delivered by the twelve, just as, at the climax of the gospel, we are to read that all the nations of the earth are to be judged by their treatment of the little brothers of Jesus. Before that consummation comes, however, there are to be some strange reversals. "I will tell you a story," he goes on, "to make clear what I mean."

In the very lively parable which follows it should be noticed that there are three groups of labourers in the vineyard. The "vineyard," of course, stands for Palestine, so that we are still mainly concerned here with the mission of the twelve to Israel. The first batch bargained for a definite sum, the second three groups were promised a fair wage, while those

who came in last were promised nothing at all, for the best text, unlike our versions, drops out "Whatever is right, I will pay you" from v. 7. It is interesting to notice that the word "saw," or "caught sight of," is used of the call of Peter and most of the twelve; if we are justified in pressing a small point like this, they belong to the second group, those who came in at nine, twelve, or three o'clock. There is nowhere any suggestion that they tried to make terms. But there is good reason for the belief that they were not actually the first disciples of Jesus; Judas Iscariot may well have been the first chosen, and, knowing what we do about him, we should not be surprised if he did attempt to bargain with his Master. The fact that he carried the money-box, and continued to carry it after the keys of the Kingdom had been promised to Peter, is enough by itself to make us suspect that he could only have come by the important office of steward by arriving on the scene first. Is Jesus afraid of Peter becoming infected with Judas' calculating spirit? A side-reference to Judas is perhaps intended in the use of the word "comrade"; He said to *one* of them—Judas is almost always called "*one* of the twelve"—"Comrade, I am not wronging you." The word translated "Comrade" is peculiar to this gospel in the New Testament, etc., as the last of the three examples of its occurrence is explicitly addressed to Judas (26, 50), we may hazard the guess that a reference to Judas is also implied here and in 22, 12. Moreover, in the Testimony-book "comrade" is the title given to Judas; the word comes from the

55th Psalm: "It was thou, a man mine equal, my *comrade*, and my familiar friend."

A Rabbinic parable is extant which provides us with a very piquant contrast in application. The plot of that story is the same. A man who worked only one hour was paid as much as those who had been at it all day; but in the Rabbinic version the reply made to the protest of the aggrieved workmen was to the effect that he had done more hard work in one hour than they had done all day; the parable was suggested by the premature death of a promising young Rabbi. No insinuation of that kind can be found here. The Rabbinic story is based upon the idea of merit, the Gospel-parable on that of free unmerited grace. The difference between the men who came in last and the others was that, in their case, nothing was said about wages on either side. They did not work for love, but at least nothing was said about reward; all was left to the generous impulse of the Master. They did not work long, but they worked as long as they could, and did what was asked of them. Moreover, they were the Master's own special discovery, the men whom He *found*, the people whom nobody else dreamed of asking, and, just for that very reason they were His own. "Cannot I do what I like with My own?"

Every disciple of Jesus must, at one time or another, feel himself to be the last, the least, and the lowest. Perhaps that is what "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" really means, for they were helpless infants, babies in arms, of whom Jesus said this. In outward life we must be men and women, and play a man or

woman's part, but in our relations with God we are always "little children," and everyone who would enter into life must, once and for all, face reality. The publican, the man upon whom the world impresses the fact that he is an outcast every day of the week, and every hour of the day, does not need to become last, for he knows that he is that already. He may seem brazen, but at the touch of real sympathy, he will often melt, quite suddenly. With other followers of Jesus, like ourselves, a sense of utter helplessness does not come naturally, for the security of our lives and the respect with which we are treated teaches the most diffident among us a measure of self-reliance. At one stage or another of our relations with Jesus, we have to unlearn this, we have to become last, before we can hope to be first. Ultimately, no doubt, as this glorious parable suggests, there will be no first or last, for "One is our Leader, and all we are brethren." An equal entrance into the joy of our Lord is to be the reward of all faithful lovers of Jesus alike; but, on the way to that consummation, there will be many startling changes of relative position; the first into Paradise with Jesus will not be Peter, James, or John, but a young brigand dying in despair on a Cross. To be with Jesus in that last hour seemed for the moment to count more with Him than the three years those older friends of His had spent in His service. All get home in the long run, but some have further to go than others, because they, too, must learn utterly to despair of themselves, and of all else beside Christ.

Chapter III — *The Parable Fulfilled*

(Chap. 20, 17–28)

JESUS follows the parable expounded in our last chapter with a detailed prophecy of the Passion; He who is the First-born of all creation goes on His way to be last indeed, to give Himself up as a "ransom for many," the last and least and lowest. The beginning of the last stage of the via crucis is marked by words of simple dignity. Mark's less formal "And He was in the way, going up to Jerusalem" is altered to "And being destined to go up to Jerusalem." With "deliberate speed, majestic instancy" the Son of Man goes on His appointed path.

The First Gospel alone tells us that the mother of the sons of Zebedee was the bearer of their somewhat selfish request for places of special honour in the Kingdom. Perhaps the evangelist wishes to put a less damaging construction upon the action of the two young men, but, in any case, it is extremely likely, in the peasant-class from which they came, that they would send their mother to plead for them. That they prompted her is clear from the reply of Jesus, addressed to them rather than her: "You know not what you are asking for." They should by-and-by drink His cup of martyrdom, but the favoured places are reserved for others. I adopt, it will be seen, the more natural and pointed Western

and Syriac reading "for others," instead of "for those for whom." Who the others were to be can be seen in the sequel. In the great hour of Jesus, James and John were far enough away from Him on the right and left of the Cross which was His throne were two outcasts, while she, the mother who had asked for her sons the chief posts of honour and of danger, was fated to look on at the tragic issue of her dreams. That our evangelist realised the poignancy of this tragedy, wrapped up, like so many others, within the greatest of all tragedies, is clear from the fact that the last words of his Passion-story are "and the mother of the sons of Zebedee."

So the word of Jesus found fulfilment and we, who have lived to see Him crucified again between two armies in France and Flanders, while many of us who had talked about sacrifice all our preaching days were left out in the cold, and through the long dragging months of war the sense of our own futility was hammered home upon us, can understand the little tragedy of Salome, if the great tragedy of Jesus is beyond us. Thus, in one way or another, we must all be disillusioned and brought low. We dream of a Kingdom and find a Cross, a Cross we cannot share, cannot even understand. We may not keep silence about it, for, following Jesus, we are brought inevitably there. But we have not been there long before we are made to see that we are far enough away, and away because, like the eleven, though we may not have betrayed the Crucified, we have denied and forsaken Him times without number. We begin our ministry preaching the Gospel to sinners, but before

many years have passed we come to see that, by our easy impatience, our jealousy of other men's successes, our desire for the glow and the glamour of Christian experience without its pains, we have hindered, not helped Him. So we come back to the hymn which we gave out for the benefit of our congregations when we began, and apply its knife-thrust and its healing to our own spirits :—

> " I have spilt Thy precious blood,
> Crucified the Son of God . . .
> God is Love, I know, I feel,
> Jesus weeps, and loves me still ! "

This is the way by which very many of us have come to such power and assurance as we now possess, by the most painful of all processes, the experience of futility, of not being wanted, culminating in the discovery that we had been preaching of cross-bearing quite sincerely and with the best intentions, but without the least idea of what it really means. We were ready, so far as we knew ourselves, to drink any cup the Master might have for us, but we did not know how unfit we were, until the time came when He shewed us, by simply doing without us. Our comfort is to know that this valley of humiliation was trodden before by better men than we, the first apostles of Jesus.

The request of the sons of Zebedee naturally caused heartburning among the twelve, and Jesus tells them that, before any of them can really hope to be first, he must somehow succeed in becoming last. What will happen soon will bring them all down to the

dust, for but the present the only sure way, even to a temporary primacy, was for a man to make himself indispensable. He does not upbraid them for their ambition, for after all it was the generous ambition to be more serviceable to Him than the others. A Commander-in-Chief is so necessary to a campaign that, if he is taken captive, any number of private soldiers will be surrendered to secure his release. But in this new army the parts are to be reversed; the Captain will give Himself up for His men, will use His own value to win release for "many." We need not bewilder ourselves by asking to whom the ransom was paid; the point is rather that the One who was all important is to sacrifice Himself for the insignificant, and that this is to be the rule of the new fellowship: Make yourself indispensable and then obliterate yourself, if need be. He will go out alone into "no man's land," will draw the enemy's fire, and so make a less dangerous advance possible for those who shall follow. When the devil concentrated his artillery upon Jesus he over-reached himself and exposed his hidden batteries. Now we know what evil is really like—the evil that is most deadly, because it is masked by good, or partly good, intentions, in our own lives and secret thoughts. We could only have seen jealousy for what it really is, when we are made to realise what jealousy like our own did with Jesus. He was lifted up on the Cross, the Victim of jealousy, greed, and party-passion, so that all the world might see this snake in the grass, the evil concealed in the hearts of well-meaning people like ourselves. The men who crucified Jesus were

not bad men ; it was not the sin of the publican and the harlot, but the sins of such as we, that did this to Him. He gave Himself up to be the last, the Victim divine upon whose guiltless head all the burden of the world's doom was laid, that we might learn to be last in our humility and penitence without ever needing to be last, as He was, in His despair.

Chapter IV — *The Strategy of Jesus*

(Chap. 20, 29–34 and Summary)

JESUS is now preparing His last great appeal to the nation and the world, but the healing of the two blind men, coming in, as it does, at this point serves to remind us that, in His absorption in the business and destiny of the world, He has not forgotten how to be the Good Physician. His compassion and the power to which it gave rise were never more evident than when He was moving to the pain and glory of the Cross.

Before we pass on to the Triumphal Entry, it will perhaps be well to survey the development of the ministry of Jesus up to this decisive point. It was suggested in an earlier chapter that, in our study of the relations of Jesus with individual men and women, we were apt to overlook His appeal to groups and communities. I shall take if for granted here that the first ten chapters of the Fourth Gospel—excluding the sixth—deal with a teaching ministry in Judaea and Jerusalem carried on while John the Baptist was still preaching, before Jesus began His Galilean campaign. He would go first to the Rabbis and their pupils, the scholars whose conversation He had found so absorbing as a boy of twelve years old. They were provoked beyond measure by His radicalism. This young man took too much upon Himself;

He would not have it that one day was specially sacred, that one book could never be superseded as a complete revelation of God's will for men, that one sex and one family alone was qualified for the sacramental functions of religion, that there was but one place where men could worship God and one chosen people to whom God had revealed Himself — what was left, if He was allowed to have His way? It was an astounding claim that all these sacred things were to take second place to Him, that He was Lord of the Sabbath, of the Temple, that the Book was all about Him, that God was in some special sense a Father of His own! The Rabbis were never quite at home with the Messianic hope, and they would have nothing to do with books, like the Book of Enoch or the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, which were inspired by it; that is why we have not got them in our Bibles. When questioned about the coming of God's kingdom, they would say, "In God's good time, but certainly not till Israel obeys the law." Jesus accepted their watchword—obedience—but spoke of Himself as that ideal incarnate and even the best of the Rabbis were frankly bewildered by His demand that they, of all people, would have no place in the new Israel, unless they would submit to baptism like any heathen, thus acknowledging that until then they had been outside it! John the Baptist made the same demand, but John could be patronised or ignored; he was at least on the side of the angels and was a preacher of righteousness, and it was a good thing for the people of the land to get baptised. But this man could not

be ignored. Their religious pre-suppositions laid the train of their opposition, and professional jealousy fired it; they are soon on the point of stoning Him for blasphemy, and He slips away to Galilee about the time that John is imprisoned.

From their leaders Jesus turns to the rank and file of law-abiding people, away in Galilee. His fame had gone before Him, and the religious public are ready to listen. The "Sermon on the Mount" gives us the substance of His attempt to make Himself clear to those who were already more or less closely attached to Him, to whom, unlike their official leaders, apocalyptic hopes meant very much. He uses the language of their favourite books, "Son of Man," "the Kingdom of Heaven," "the poor in spirit," and so on. As this appeal has been dealt with at length in the "Realism of Jesus," all that we need do here is to get it into focus. It is clear that Jesus did at this stage hope to be able to make these people a bridge between the old and the new Church; they were to be His constituency. With all but a few of them He failed, perhaps because they were not strong enough to stand against increasing pressure from Jerusalem, still more because they themselves were afraid of His terrible radicalism. He was too unsettling for quiet people like themselves, and when, after the visit of scribes from Jerusalem, He was driven out of the synagogues to become a field-preacher, they acquiesced, we may imagine with what reluctance and sinking of heart. It was the demand for unquestioning surrender to His personal claim with which the Sermon ends, which

began the process of alienation in Galilee, as in Jerusalem.

Jesus appeals next to the larger Galilean public, and His preaching of the Kingdom of God by the lakeside met with instant and embarrassing success. Here the presuppositions met with were political rather than religious. With the nationalist movement which swayed the minds of the people Jesus will have nothing to do ; that there was no road for Him that way had been made clear to Him once and for all in His temptation experience. For a little while we watch Him struggling against the rising tide of misunderstanding, a fugitive from His own popularity. When " scribes from Jerusalem " appear with instructions from the authorities to stop the effects of His campaign upon the inflammable Galileans at all costs, He responds to their challenge with an unreserved assertion of His powers and claims ; but when they are beaten off He still holds the crowd at arm's length, giving them a series of parables which He knows will damp their ardour, and so gaining time to take the twelve men who are to be entrusted with the mysteries of the Kingdom across the water. There in more parables He unfolds to them the nature of His person and the secret of His mission. They do not understand but would not quite forget, and their more unhindered companionship with Him binds them so closely to Him that, on His return to the western shore, He is ready to send them out to preach the Kingdom without Him : their mission-preaching would not rouse the wild hopes excited by the greatness of His own personality.

In this way Jesus gets a breathing-space in which to face His ever-increasing difficulties, already narrowing down His path to the way of the Cross. When the disciples come back, they shew signs that the separation had not been altogether good for them. Their congregations have infected them anew with their own nationalist passions, and the murder of John the Baptist has raised public feeling to fever-heat. He takes them at once across the lake.

But this time His hope of quiet is disappointed, for the Galileans have made up their minds that they are not going to let Jesus go the way of John, if they can help it. His constant escapes and refusals have exasperated them to the last degree, and they follow Him round, travelling all the way on foot. When they find Him, their search for the lost leader has tired them out, and they look rather pitiable than dangerous. So, as they are well away from the danger zone, and even a riot will not involve them with the Government, Jesus feeds and rests them, seeking to teach them His lesson of trust in the Heavenly Father and each other, no longer by words but by deed, and at the same time inaugurating a new kind of sacramental fellowship, one in which men, women and children share on equal terms. But with hunger appeased and weariness gone, the people remember what they had come for and the supper-party ends with an unseemly scuffle, in which the disciples themselves were implicated. Jesus thereupon sends the crowd home one way and His disciples another, and Himself goes up the hills to think and pray out the next step. At three o'clock in the

morning He is still there. His own sky has cleared, for communion with His Father has reassured Him that the little boat He has launched on the sea of this troublesome world would, after all, outride the storms of time. Then the moon comes out, and He looks down upon the lake to see the image of the fears He has just conquered, a boat manned by desperate men, drifting out of its course, almost buried in the waves. But they are being driven back to Him, as they always will be when they meet a contrary wind, and He goes to their rescue and binds up yet once more the broken thread of their confidence. The Galilean ministry is almost over now but we have still to notice two classes in or near Galilee to which He made a special appeal. They were the sheep lost inside, and the sheep lost outside the fold, the publicans and the Gentiles.

One of the reasons for the alienation from Jesus of the puritan-party, represented by the followers of John the Baptist, was His intimacy with publicans and other questionable people. They were not simply tax-gatherers in the service of a foreign government; we should gather from hints in the gospels and outside them that they were practised money-lenders and blackmailers. The "adversary," that sinister figure who appears in the "Sermon on the Mount" as the oppressor of the peasant-farmer, was a member of this outcast class. The Pharisees were ready to welcome the publican back into the synagogue, if he repented; Jesus scandalised respectable people by making overtures to him while he still practised his nefarious

trade. From their point of view, it might well seem that He liked such company best; we can imagine history repeating itself, if He came again, and was notoriously friendly with money-lenders! Everything about many of the men and women He met at Levi's house must have jarred upon Him, and we may be sure that He denounced the lives they were living in no measured terms; only He established contact with them before He tried to reform them, and that was what no one before Him had been bold enough to do. The only way finally to destroy the abuses which social reformers denounce is to win over the men chiefly responsible for them. So His love and pity kept Jesus in this most uncongenial company, and He had surprising successes there. Two, perhaps even three, publicans had a place among His twelve; they could write Greek, and their leader, Matthew, soon became, if tradition may be trusted, the first literary man of the new Church. Almost certainly he was the protagonist of the earliest Christian apologetic against the Jews, perhaps also the first collector of the sayings of Jesus. Quite clearly, he was the inspirer, though he was not the author, of the First Gospel. But, upon the whole, the campaign of Jesus to win the new rich failed; the parables of the rich fool and of Dives and Lazarus sum up His verdict upon the power of too comfortable living to close the heart and destroy the soul.

Knowing the history of His own people as He did, Jesus must often have thought about the fate of the lost ten tribes. May not His choice of Galilee for the scene of His public preaching have been dictated

partly by the fact that these lost sheep might still be found among the miscellaneous population of the lakeside ?

However that may be, the fact that our evangelist calls Galilee "Galilee of the Gentiles" with an emphasis which the commentators have slurred over, suggests that Jesus had wider hopes still, that He left the plain of Genessaret and visited Tyre and Sidon, as well as the Decapolis, not merely to escape from the embarrassments caused by nationalist unrest, but because His heart was set upon those "other sheep, not of this fold ;" His interest in the Samaritans is attested by Luke and John. When He has surveyed the ground, and no class resident within His reach has been left unvisited, He is ready for His supreme appeal ; for this Jerusalem is chosen, for Gentiles as well as Jews will be represented at the feast. Lifted up upon the Cross in the centre of the world, the bridge between three continents, He will draw all men to Him.

Chapter V — *The King Comes to His Own*

(Chap. 21, 1–17)

As is his wont, the evangelist makes the true meaning of the Triumphal Entry clear by a testimony. Jesus is a new kind of king, mounted not upon a horse, symbol of military power, but upon an ass, the token of humility and peace. All the details have been carefully arranged beforehand, for its significance is to be as dramatically impressive as possible. Here is a new Jesus, for never before had He caused His voice to be heard " in the street " ; we may be sure that He who had so persistently refused " a sign," who had turned down the way of self-advertisement when He refused to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, only changed His strategy because of desperate necessity. The Rabbis said that, if Israel was worthy, the Messiah would come with the clouds of Heaven ; if unworthy, riding upon an ass, for he would share the abasement of his people. But the Galilean pilgrims had no attention to spare for the manner of His entry ; all they cared about was that at last their Hero was asserting Himself ! Surely He would lay aside His tantalising hesitations, and, assured as He was of their support, attack the detestable Government in its lair ! So they threw caution to the winds, and, defying Pilate to do his worst, cried " God save the Son of David ! "

so persistently that the apathetic city was stirred. People said "Who is this?" and they answered: "This is Jesus, *our* prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee!" It is significant that they did not call Him in so many words the Messiah; perhaps they were waiting for some more practical direct action to justify His claim. All they were sure of was that Jesus had now taken John's place as the herald of the new age, and he was *their* prophet, as John had never been; they would shew these Judaeans that they could raise a prophet (cf. John 7, 52).

We should notice in passing that our evangelist apparently makes Jesus enter the city upon two asses. His wish to make the details of the entry tally with the letter of the text from Zechariah was probably father to the thought that there were two. If so, he cannot have been an expert Semitic scholar; otherwise he would have known that "riding upon an ass, and upon the colt the foal of an ass" means nothing more than "riding upon a young ass-colt." This trifle detracts but little from the majesty of the story.

Jesus at once proceeds to take action in a manner calculated to assert His claim. It was universally believed—a belief based upon such passages as Mal. 3, 1—that the "Lord" would "suddenly" come to the Temple. According to the Fourth Gospel, He had cleansed the temple-courts once before (John 2, 13ff); on that occasion, there had been only a mild protest against His action. But the interrupted traffic soon began again, when the presence of the terrible young Reformer had been withdrawn, and

it was proceeding merrily when Jesus entered the city two years later. His language is stronger than before; then He had said "Make not My Father's house a shop"; now it is "You have made it a den of thieves." Nor is there any need of a whip of small cords; a glance of those passionate eyes, once seen before under similar conditions, is enough to send them scurrying away. Matthew does not say, with Mark, "He began to cast out," but "He cast out"; with one great sweep of wrath He expelled them all.

The traditional interpretation of His words, quoted as they are from a similar protest made by the greatest of His forerunners, Jeremiah, has been that these agents of the chief priests are "thieves" because they had stolen the only part of the Temple precincts into which Gentiles were allowed to enter for this traffic; if their extortions exasperated the would-be Gentile worshipper beyond endurance, his tormentor had only to leap over the barrier and from that point of vantage, as from a brigand's cave, defy the uncircumcised dog to do his worst. But the belief is gaining ground among those who have a right to speak on the subject that the protest of Jesus went deeper than this. The word in Jeremiah may mean, not "thieves," but "butchers"; it is quite possible that we ought to translate, in Jer. 7, 11 and here, "you have made a shambles of it." For that was what the whole Temple had become—an unsavoury and altogether horrible shambles. It is possible to agree with Dr. Abrahams that, if you are to have a sacrificial system at all, such a market is inevitable; in that

case, so much the worse for the sacrificial system. John says that the disciples thought it was zeal for the Temple that animated the first protest of Jesus, but it was not so, the evangelist adds; He was speaking of His body, God's real Temple.

From Amos to Jeremiah, the prophets had denounced the extravagant ritual of Solomon's Temple. Passages leap into our mind: Psalm 50; Isaiah 1; Micah 6, 8; Amos 5, 21–25; Jer. 7, 11, 22. With the destruction of Solomon's Temple there was a natural reaction in its favour, and Ezekiel dreams of a reformation of its ritual, while Daniel is pictured as praying with his windows open towards Jerusalem. This reaction found its consummation in Ezra, who fastened the Temple ceremonial upon Judaism for centuries. John the Baptist reverted to the position of the older prophets. Though his father had been a priest there, he will have nothing to do with the Temple; like the Essenes, who were distinguished by the fact that they never offered sacrifices in the Temple, he stayed in the desert, and, by baptising all comers, implied that a new Israel was to be set up, an Israel to which descent from Abraham, law, and Temple are all alike irrelevant. The very priests must submit to baptism, before they can gain admission. In his avoidance of the slightest allusion to either of the two bulwarks of Judaism, the law and the Temple, John may be thought of as at first more radical than Jesus. Jesus was, as we should have expected, eager to make the best of an institution which had meant so much to His countrymen, and He would never forget the

hours He had spent there in His boyhood. It is all the more essential that we should notice that, after His closer acquaintance with its ritual during His early Judaean ministry, His condemnation of all that it had come to stand for hardens into an active campaign against it.

The crusade begins with His first purge; the disciples were mistaken, says the fourth evangelist, in thinking that He was enthusiastic for the Temple even then. Paul echoes his interpretation, when, in 2 Cor. 5, 1, he gives us a reminiscence of the saying about a house "not made with hands," in a passage concerned with the spiritual body. That the saying underlying John 2, 19 originally had the words "made with hands" and "not made with hands" is clear from Mark 14, 58, where a garbled version is brought forward by the false witnesses, at the trial before the Sanhedrin. The result of the first encounter with the priests is given us in our Lord's quiet words to the woman of Samaria: "You shall neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem worship the Father." In the Galilean ministry there are no direct references to Temple sacrifices, but the first evangelist tells us that Jesus twice over quoted the anti-sacrificial testimony from Hosea, "I want brotherly feeling, not sacrifice," once in connexion with a very startling assertion, "A greater than the Temple is here." The climax comes when He suddenly appears in the Temple, sums up the whole paraphernalia in one withering phrase, and predicts its doom. One cannot help thinking that there may be something authentic about the unwritten saying,

quoted by Epiphanius as from the Ebionite gospel: "I came to destroy the sacrifices, and, unless you cease from sacrificing, the wrath shall not cease from you."

But Jesus is never merely destructive, and the First Gospel tells us that, after His drastic clearance of the squalid rubbish of the sacrificial system, He gives the Temple one more chance, consecrating it afresh by healing the blind and the lame there. The ministry of healing is the true sacrifice, for He could only heal men and women by bearing their sicknesses and carrying their diseases (8, 17). If they will use the temple-courts for the service of man, it may still be God's house, but only on that condition. And, if the true sacrifice is service, the true ritual is the praise of little children. The children had enjoyed the procession, we may be sure, for they love any kind of pageant, and know Jesus for their friend already. They are still keeping it up, as children will, and the "trustees," like some of their modern representatives, are aggrieved at unseemly demonstrations; it was all very well in the streets, but in the Temple! Jesus replies that such sacrificial service to men as the healing of the blind and the lame, such perfect praise to God as the songs of children, sweeten the Temple-courts and make it fit to be called, for a little while longer, God's house.

Chapter VI *Two Difficult Passages Discussed*
(Chap. 21, 18–32)

THERE follows in the First, as in the Second Gospel, a story which has always troubled its readers. Our difficulty may be due to Western literalness, but, as so much is at stake, it is well to face it candidly. We need not trouble very much about the fate of the fig-tree; but, at the first glance, the account does seem to suggest something like petulance on the part of Jesus. Mark was obviously puzzled by the story, for he adds an embarrassed note—"for it was not the season for figs." As a matter of fact early figs do ripen in Judaea in March or April, so that it was not unnatural to expect figs at Passiontide. Perhaps we should amend to "where it was the season for figs," which makes better sense, though it involves rather a drastic change. An easy explanation has been suggested, which may be too good to be true. I have read somewhere that there was a well-known fig-tree near Jerusalem, which was always barren, and that the Rabbis said that it would burst into blossom and fruit the year the Messiah came. Unhappily, I cannot trace my authority, and have not yet been able to find it in the voluminous pages of the Talmud, so that I am not free to cut the knot in this way. Another explanation is to the effect that the story is simply a mistaken version of the

parable of the fig-tree spared a year longer, found in Luke 13, 6ff.—a case of a parable turned miracle. It appears to be rather a matter of historical sequence than of identity. Whether the cursing of the fig-tree is a spoken or an acted parable, it falls into place when we see that at the end of the parable of the spared fig-tree the Vine-dresser is made to say "Leave it alone one year longer, that I may dig about it and give it some manure; if it bear fruit then, well and good; but if it does not, you shall cut it down." Now the Vine-dresser has paid His last visit, His attentions have been all in vain, and destruction is inevitable. We could accept readily enough a parable of a fig-tree cut down, spoken at this juncture.

There is an unwritten saying quoted as coming from Jesus in Papias, in which the extraordinary fruitfulness of vines, fig-trees, and cornfields in the Kingdom is dwelt upon with evident relish. As similar ideas are to be found in the Book of Enoch, and there it is regarded as a sign of the wickedness of men when fruit-trees are backward, we may infer that the notion of the sympathy of the natural creation with the fortunes of mankind was already familiar, before Paul gave immortal expression to it in the sentence "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together with us until now." The earth, which began to grow thorns and thistles when man fell, will become Eden again when he is redeemed. When we associate with this doctrine, already familiar to Him, the fact that in prophetic symbolism Jerusalem in Palestine is the fig-tree in

the vineyard, we can see what was moving in the mind of Jesus that morning. As He passed the fig-tree, the tragedy swept over His soul again, the city doomed because He had come, and made His last appeal—in vain. So He mutters, half under His breath, words which to the superstitious disciples, sounded like a curse. Mark tells us that, as they were returning in the evening, Peter noticed that the fig-tree looked blighted, and, thinking perhaps of another saying of his Master's which he had taken for a curse, said "Lord, see! the fig-tree Thou didst curse is withered!" When we remember the extraordinary power the Oriental attributes to a curse or ban, however lightly uttered, we can see how the story grew. The tragic meaning at the heart of it is that Jesus has now lost hope for His own people; so far as the history of this life is concerned, nothing can save them now from the doom which their treatment of their King inevitably involved.

Such high-handed action as that of Jesus in the Temple could not be overlooked, but the priests felt the difficulty of their position in face of the popularity of Jesus; their embarrassment is proved by the caution with which they approached Him on His arrival in Jerusalem next morning. They made one mistake in tactics, however; they should not have exposed the fact that they were co-operating with their inveterate opponents, the Rabbis, to public comment. The two parties had been divided on the question of John, the Pharisees apparently having been inclined to countenance his baptism as of value at least for the "people of the land," while the

Sadducees kept ostentatiously aloof. At least this seems to be the most probable interpretation of the facts, though the gospels are not very clear on this point. The First Gospel (3, 7) speaks of "Pharisees and Sadducees" coming together to the baptism, but Luke speaks only of the "crowds" (3, 7), and the record of the parties suggests that nothing but their common hatred of Jesus could possibly have induced them to work together. It will be remembered that Paul on a later occasion (Acts 23, 7) had no difficulty in setting them at odds with one another.

In reply to their cautiously-worded request for information as to His authority, Jesus at once introduced the name of John the Baptist. To the Jews of the period public debate on religious questions was the chief amusement at feast-time; they found the same kind of satisfaction in the attacks and counter-attacks of the disputants as the Greek found in the games of the arena, the Roman in gladiatorial contests, and the Britisher finds in a football match. Each of the combatants sought to entrap his opponent on the horns of a dilemma, to force him to admit one or the other of two equally embarrassing inferences from his own position, while the crowd roared its applause at clever thrust or quick disarming parry. Jesus is following this method. Everybody in the crowd must have thought it strange that these notorious enemies, Pharisees and Sadducees, were on the same side for once, and He at once draws attention to their sinister alliance. His sudden counter-thrust visibly confuses them; they dare not say that John was God's inspired

messenger, for it was notorious that his preaching had been conspicuously silent about the Torah, for which the Rabbis stood, and the Temple, upon which the priests depended. They could not whole-heartedly approve of him without contradicting their whole position; so, apart from one or two tentative advances, they had as far as possible ignored him, and waited for the excitement his preaching caused to die down. They would have done the same with Jesus, if they could, but He could not be ignored. If, on the other hand, they said he was not a prophet, they would run a serious risk of trouble with the Galileans; in any case, all chance of influencing them against Jesus would be gone. They retire in confusion, and the Galileans are left rioting hilariously in the prowess of their prophet.

Jesus proceeds at once to point the moral. We must admit that the parable of the two sons, which follows, is not as clear in outline as is usual in the First Gospel. This may not be the evangelist's fault; a fundamental difference between Oriental and Western psychology seems to have confused the issue here. We should have expected the son who promised to go into the vineyard, but did not keep his engagement, to represent the Pharisees, who made such a profession of obedience, while by the other son, who made no profession but actually obeyed, would be meant the publicans and other disreputable people, who did "get good" from John's preaching. But the comment which follows in v. 32 throws us off the track again; now the

meaning seems to be that the publicans said "Yes" to John's message, while the Pharisees said "No," but did not afterwards change their minds and go. That the difficulty has always been felt is clear from the cloud of various readings; some MSS. say "The first" in v. 31, others "The last," while many reverse the order of the two sons, in order to agree with the comment in v. 32.

Probably the crowd was not unanimous. The late Dr. Mackie was once telling this parable to a group of Syrian women exactly as it stands in our version, and when she asked the question "Which of the two did the will of his Father?" they replied with one consent "The last"—the one who said "Yes," and did not go. "Why?" she said in amazement: "he did no work in the vineyard!" To her astonishment they replied, "A day's work is a little thing, but to say 'No' to your father's beard is a great crime!" That what appears to us a curious twist in psychology is the cause of this inextricable confusion is confirmed by a strange insertion in one MS. of the book of Ecclesiasticus (19, 21), "A servant that saith to his master, 'I will not do according to thy will,' though he do so afterwards, angereth him that feedeth him." Evidently the meaning of the parable was that practical obedience is more important even than good manners. Possibly the words "in the way of righteousness" give us the best clue. With their professions of loyalty to "righteousness"—their watchword—the Pharisees should have been the first to answer John's call. They did not go, but publicans and harlots did, and by so doing atoned

for their past disloyalties. So much is clear, but the details of the argument have been obscured by a succession of bewildered Eastern copyists, whose whole bent of mind made it hard for them to believe that discourtesy to a father could be excused; one after another has given a twist to the sentences, until the whole has become textually the most confused passage in the four gospels.

Chapter VII — *Two More Parables* (Chap. 21, 33–22, 14)

JESUS has now carried the war into the enemy's camp, and a parable follows, which shews only too clearly that weapons are out, and that the stage is already being set for the final tragedy. Nothing could save those most relentless of His murderers, the chief-priests, from the perpetration of the crime they are meditating, but the exposure in the most explicit terms of the issue to which their thoughts are moving. In a parable the meaning of which could not be misunderstood, Jesus tells them what their fingers were by this time itching to do with Him. The sharpest point of all is that it is implied that they at least knew Him—"This is the Heir," the Owner's Son; "let us kill Him." Here is the King come to His own, the people prepared for His coming for centuries; many did not know Him, but some of the few who did hated Him all the more fiercely because they knew. He upset their plans; they could not live as they did in the same world with this inconvenient Intruder, who alas! was not an intruder. For He would not leave them alone; He could not be managed or frowned down; so they cast Him out of the vineyard which was His; first they ostracised Him, and then they put Him to death. What else could they do, if He could not change, and they would not? Matthew and Luke

agree against Mark here; Mark says "They slew Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard"; Matthew and Luke "They cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him." He was already an outcast, before He became a martyr.

But you may kill Jesus; you cannot keep Him buried. It will not be long, He warns them, before their rôles will be reversed; "the Stone which the builders had no use for is to become the Keystone of the universe." Nothing they do can alter that, and those who seek to stop the wheels of God's redemptive purpose do so at their peril; they, not it, will be broken. Probably v. 44 comes from Luke 20, 18, but the meaning of the passage is plain.

We must stop for a moment to emphasise a word found only in Matthew in this context—"a nation." One of the doctrines of the Testimony book was to the effect that the Christian Church was the "new nation." The Old Testament text, always alluded to, if not actually quoted, was Gen. 25, 23: "Two nations shall be in thy womb, and the elder shall serve the younger." The question in debate between Jews and Christians in the First Century was "Which is Esau, and which is Jacob?" The Christians said "The Jews are obviously Esau, for they come first; we are Jacob, the true Israel, who is to supplant his brother." Here we have one of the watchwords of the battle which Matthew fought and won before Paul began his better-known conflict with Jewish antagonists. It was a battle over the body of the Old Testament; the weapons used were proof-texts, and the Testimony book was the ammunition-dump;

it is probable that we owe not only the fact that we claim the Bible as the possession of the Christian Church, but the very form which the historic creeds of the Church have taken, to this anthology of quotations which has left a deeper mark upon Christology than all Paul's epistles put together. Paul himself found his weapons sharp and ready to his hand here, for his earliest missionary preaching was testimony-preaching; "Christ died for our sins and was buried and rose again *according to the Scriptures.*" He means "according to the Old Testament," for the gospels were not written. We need not infer that Matthew, or anybody else, invented this line of argument out of his own head; Luke is probably substantially right when he tells us that Jesus gave His disciples the outline of the testimony-argument on Easter Sunday (24, 27, 46); the author of the Testimony-book filled in the details. If that is so, the Old Testament stands upon an immovable rock, simply because of the part it played in the interior life of Jesus, and consequently in the history of the Church. No conceivable results of literary criticism can undermine that position, once firmly established. Whether Jesus Himself used the word "nation" in this context may perhaps be doubted; the Churc was not regularly called a "nation" till after the fall of Jerusalem. It was the use of this explosive word that made the Church for the first time seriously suspect with the Government, for a new nation implies a new allegiance. The question whether Christ or Caesar was supreme lord could not long be evaded.

Luke has a parable not unlike that of the Prince's wedding, but his story of a great supper (14, 16ff) is differently placed, and can scarcely be regarded as merely a variant version of the same original. Indeed the turn that the plot takes is so dissimilar in these twin parables that it is more reasonable to suppose that Jesus used the same idea—that of a meal to which invitations are issued beforehand—twice over, starting from a different angle of approach, than that either of the two evangelists is responsible for such drastic alterations. The chief interest in Luke's parable—to ignore for the moment minor variations—centres around people who were brought violently in, in Matthew's, round a man who was thrown violently out. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen the Heir is cast out of His domain, in that of the man without the wedding-garment the Heir has become the Prince, and it is the turn of those who treat Him with discourtesy to be cast out; in Chapter 21, 33ff the First has become last; in Chapter 22, 1ff He has become First again. The parable in the First Gospel has a national as well as an individual application, whereas the Lucan parable is directed rather towards social differences. In the former the invited guests are the Jewish people generally, and the King's armies are the Roman legions who are to burn their city, but Drs. Denney and Charles agree that v. 7 is probably a later addition made, Dr. Denney thinks, by a Christian preacher, while Dr. Charles suggests that the evangelist himself added the verse after the fall of Jerusalem. It is more important for our purpose to notice that

this parable, as it stands in Matthew, like that of the virgins in Matt. 25, 1ff, that of the Bridegroom's slaves in Luke, 12, 38, and the sayings recorded in John 3, 29 and Mark 2, 19, is suggested by the Messianic idea of the Bridegroom and His bride, a figure which inspired Paul to his loftiest eloquence in the Epistle to the Ephesians and the unknown author of the Odes of Solomon to the loveliest of all Christian poetry.

When the specially invited guests will not come, the King, determined to secure some kind of a company to do justice to the great occasion, sends out His slaves along the main roads to the places where the idlers and beggars congregate. The phrase translated " the highways " in our version and peculiar to the First Gospel in the New Testament is one of many Biblical words upon which the papyri lately discovered in Egypt have thrown light. It means " the points at which the main roads through the town leave the gates." A crowd of idlers is always to be found just outside the city gate in the East; they slip out when the gate is opened, and in again at sunset, and they spend the day basking in the sun or clamouring for backsheesh. About the city gate of Judaism were gathered a motley company of Gentiles and Jewish outcasts, in the community but having no part in its life but that of spectators—again the universalist note!

The Wisdom-colouring of this parable is evident to a careful reader of the Old Testament. In the Book of Proverbs we read (8, 3): " She (Wisdom) crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, where

men come in at the gates," and again (in Prov. 9, 2 ff.): "She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine . . . . she hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth in the public places of the city, 'Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.'" The coincidences are very striking, and provide us with further evidence that Jesus thinks and speaks of Himself as the "Wisdom of God" in this Gospel. But characteristic Matthean ideas meet us in every sentence. For instance, "both bad and good" are swept into the banqueting-hall, the fact that the "bad" come first hinting that they were in the majority; like the drag-net, the indiscriminate hospitality of the King brings in "fish of every kind." Then there is the word "find," twice repeated. As the Pearl merchant "found" the most precious of all pearls in the dust of the market-place floor, as the Householder found men who would work for Him, without bargaining as to the wage they were to be paid, at the eleventh hour amongst the men whom nobody would employ, and Jesus "found" Simon, the coloured man from Africa (27, 32), to carry His Cross, so the slaves are to bring in everybody they *find*, for "Christianity is the religion of all poor devils."

"This world," said Rabbi Jacob, "is like a porch before the world to come; make thyself ready in the porch, that thou mayest enter the banqueting-hall." In this ante-chamber the guests are offered a wedding-garment to hide their rags. There is a word still extant in Arabic—"Khil'al"—which means a garment presented by a king; if you are the king's own subject, to refuse to wear it is *lèse*

majesté; to accept such a garment from the monarch of another country is treason to your own. This is the true explanation of the story of Gehazi in 2 Kings, 5. Naaman was the general of the king of Syria, then at war with Israel; by accepting "two changes of garments" from Naaman, Gehazi became a traitor to his country and a subject of the King of Syria; "the leprosy of Naaman" is high treason. The man who refused the wedding-garment has openly defied the King to whom his allegiance was due, and consequently is the one blot upon the landscape, when the King comes in to inspect His guests. Judas, always addressed as "comrade" in the First Gospel, is meant; we remember the words of the Fourth Gospel, which tell us how this parable found a swift fulfilment—"straightway he went out, *and it was night.*" We hope to review the three references to him as "comrade" (20, 13; 22, 12; 26, 50) when we come to the last and most dramatic of them.

Chapter VIII — *Jesus Choosing His Ground*

(Chap. 22, 15–23, 28)

THE enemies of Jesus have now discovered that they had made a blunder in joining forces to attack Him on the question of His " authority " ; so they decide to make their next assault in two divisions. The Pharisees begin the action ; they bring with them the " Herodians," who occupied a position half-way between Pharisees and Sadducees, and would be specially interested in the taxes, for Galilean taxes contributed largely to Herod's revenues, and they challenge Him on the burning question of taxation. They begin with an elaborate series of compliments, congratulating Him ironically upon His fearlessness ; " You don't care for anybody, do you ? " They are obviously trying to induce Him to make an unguarded declaration. The dilemma in which they sought to involve Him was this : " If He says," they argued, " you must pay, He will lose the support of those Galilean friends of His, for He will confirm the suspicions some of them are already beginning to entertain about Him—that He is really on the side of the Government ; if He says you must not pay, we shall be able to inform Pilate that He is a revolutionary who cannot safely be ignored."

What Jesus does is by a wonderful repartee to escape from the trap prepared for Him without

committing Himself in either direction; I am following Dr. Rendel Harris' illuminating explanation at this point. He answers: "Shew Me the coin in which the tax is paid." This phrase—peculiar to Matthew—is important, because the taxes were paid in *Roman* money, and any coins in the possession of Jesus and His friends at feast-time would be Jewish, for subscriptions to the Temple had to be paid in Jewish money. A Roman shilling was soon forthcoming; on its reverse side would be the emperor's head, on its obverse that of a heathen god. Jesus looks at each side in turn, and says: "Whose head is this?" "Caesar's," they answer. "And whose is this?" "A god's." "Let them share it between them, then, for it obviously belongs to them." It may be urged that this interpretation robs the saying of all meaning, except as a neat escape from an embarrassing position; but, as a matter of fact, the older exposition was not very enlightening, for it really explained nothing. If the true God were meant, Jesus could not have put Caesar first. From the general tenour of His teaching, it is evident that Jesus did inculcate submission to the Roman Government, as ordained by God for the maintenance of public order and justice; there is no serious question that this was the decisive reason why His Galilean supporters turned against Him in the end, and cried "Not this man, but Barabbas." A dozen passages may be quoted to prove this, but no precise marking out of the boundary that divides our duty to God from our duty to our country can be based upon this or any

other saying of Jesus; indeed, the distinction is a false one, and He can never have given countenance to it.

To us it seems strange to find politics and theology mixed up as they are in this passage, but the resurrection was a question which sharply divided political parties in those days. The chief priests appear to be trying to score a point at the expense of their new allies, the Rabbis, as well as against Jesus. The nationalist party held the doctrine that those at least who lived and were ready to die for their country, were assured of the delights of Paradise, in which fig trees, vineyards, and cornfields were to be miraculously fruitful, and Leviathan and Behemoth were to be food for the pious. Very few of them would be crude enough to entertain the idea that polygamy and polyandry could be freely practised in the Messianic Kingdom, but that was what, according to these supercilious critics of popular beliefs, it really came to. One cannot help thinking that the hearts of these Sadducees were not in this wordy warfare, that they were rather for direct action against Jesus at once. The story they invent is certainly a very silly one. In answer to them Jesus declares in favour of that loftier view of the life of that other world, already propounded in the Book of Enoch, which probably came from the hill country of Galilee, as He did. The Sadducees professed to regard the Pentateuch only as the infallible word of God, whereas the Pharisees accepted also the "prophets"—a term which included the historical books as well as the prophets proper. One of the arguments the

Sadducees used in defence of their agnosticism was to the effect that no warrant for certainty as to individual survival could be found in the first five books of the Bible. Jesus instantly quotes the Book of Exodus to shew that the doctrine of continued life in fellowship with God is implied in the sentence "I am the God of Abraham"; the very fact that God could enter into fellowship with a man proved that the man so favoured could never cease to be, for God's friendships are as immortal as God Himself.

It is noticeable that, according to Matthew, it is a "lawyer" who asks the next question. This is the only place where this word is found in the First Gospel, though it is frequent in Luke. Perhaps Dr. Abrahams is right in suggesting that the questioner in this case may have been, not a born Jew, but a Gentile who was inclined to become, or had recently become, a convert to Judaism. There was a distinct tendency among the more liberally-minded interpreters of Torah to seek a basic principle to which the multitudinous commands of the law could be reduced. Hillel seems to have expressed the idea when, following the "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," he said that the whole law could be summed up in the rule, "What thou thyself hatest, do to no man"; he had been challenged to repeat the whole law, while standing on one foot, and replied in this way, adding: "The rest is commentary." Rabbi Simlai (3rd Century A.D.) said "Six hundred and thirteen precepts were imparted to Moses; David reduced them to eleven (Ps. 15), Isaiah to six (33, 15), Micah to three (6, 8), Isaiah again to two (56, 1) Habakkuk

to one (2, 4)." But the majority disliked such abbreviations, and we know that the "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" has no place in our Bible—to our very great loss—because it was boycotted by the Pharisees who ostracised Jesus too. Perhaps this questioner wished to ascertain whether Jesus shared the fears of conservative legalists, for Mark brings out very clearly that Jesus and he were in essential agreement. It is curious that so great a scholar as Wellhausen should have ascribed the original combination of the two great commandments to Jesus in spite of the fact that the combination appears three times over in the "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" (Issachar 5, 2, 5–7; Dan. 5, 3).

In the "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs" we have evidence that there was a tendency in some quarters to think of the Messiah as rather son of Levi than David, that is, rather as a priestly than a warlike king. Jesus does not deny His descent from David, but is making a last attempt to save the Galileans from their mistaken notions as to the nature of the Messiah's mission, persistence in which led straight to their rejection of Himself. Psalm 110, which is quoted here, describes the Messiah as "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, who was 'King of Salem,' that is, 'king of peace.'" We remember how the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews used this idea, and here we see where the suggestion came from; indeed, all the leading doctrines of the New Testament go back in the last resort to Jesus. The psalm was originally written in honour of Simon Maccabeus, who claimed descent

from Levi, and united the offices of high priest and king. Unlike the kings who preceded and followed him, he was more successful in peace than in war, and the poet celebrates the dawn of a new era of peace. But the whole psalm book was known as "David." "If David," says Jesus, "speaking through the lips of the heirs of his spirit" ("in spirit"), "calls the Messiah his 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" That is, how can his office be a mere repetition of David's? Jesus does not say that He Himself did not spring from David's line, but only that the psalm book, echoing the spirit of David, acknowledges that there is a higher ideal than that of the warrior king. That this was really the spirit of David is clear from 1 Chron. 22, 8, as well as from several incidents in his career.

In the 23rd Chapter we see Jesus at His most provocative, and gentle-hearted people have always felt uneasy in face of this tremendous and prolonged invective, while Jewish critics have been roused to indignant protest. One or two things should be borne in mind as we examine this seven-fold woe against the Pharisaic scribes in detail. There is no reason why we should take the condemnation of Jesus as directed against the whole Pharisaic party, but only to the dominant faction among the "scribes" or Rabbis. That there was another section is clear from several hints in the 22nd Chapter; probably they did not exercise much influence, any more than Liberal Judaism does to-day. Moreover, Jesus begins by approving their theory, and it is just their *theory* that is so warmly defended by their modern

apologists; what He attacks is their practice, and in regard to their practice we have very little evidence outside the gospels. The vices denounced are not peculiar to the Pharisees; they are precisely the vices to which all ecclesiastical bureaucracies are prone, and, in spite of their eloquent advocates, there is no reason to suppose that the Rabbis were free of them. But it is also certain that no section of the Christian Church can afford to throw many stones at the scribes; we shall be well advised to take the 23rd of Matthew very seriously and beware of the dangers which beset the most devout among us, whether Jews or Christians, when we are saddled with the reputation of expert knowledge in religious matters.

The keyword of the whole chapter is "hypocrisy," and we must ask ourselves what exactly is the meaning of this word. It does not mean merely posing for effect, as the actor does on the stage; the Greek word "hypocrite" misleads us here, for we must bear in mind that the Jews had no drama. The idea underlying the Semitic original is rather that of unreality, inconsistency, whether conscious or unconscious. "Hypocrisy," then, is hidden evil, masked, it may be, by good or partly good intention. The invective of Jesus is meant to stab the spirits of these hidebound officials broad awake. He attacks their pretensions to a monopoly of religious illumination (v. 13), their ecclesiastical unscrupulousness (v. 15)—v. 14 comes from Mark-Luke, and does not belong to the best text of Matthew—their casuistical hair-splitting (vv. 16–22), their lack of the sense of proportion

(vv. 23, 24), their preoccupation with the outsides of things (vv. 24–26) and persons (vv. 27, 28). Last of all, He charges them directly with that head and front of their offending, their murderous intentions against Himself. While shedding tears over the murder of the prophets in their father's days, they are even now meditating the crime which will crown all the murders of the past, and will doom them to a place in the diabolic succession of prophet-killers. His first coming had been ushered in by a massacre of innocents and very soon the last and foulest of all murders will have been committed, for God is ever sending His innocents into the world, only to be done to death by the cruelty and ignorance of man. Yet the "Wisdom of God" (Luke 11, 49) keeps on sending His messengers, little children and men like them, and their purity is for ever being trampled in the dust. "Wherefore all this waste of love?" To the generation to which Jesus came was offered the great opportunity, either to redeem human nature by their treatment of God's best, or to write their and our condemnation in letters of blood and fire. Knowing what we all are, can we wonder that they did not rise to this terriffic responsibility? The doom is upon us now, and we must wait till we come to Calvary, to see if there is any hope for a race of men who, it would seem, needs must *hate* the highest when we see it, because it is so unlike ourselves and so unspeakably disturbing.

Chap. IX "*In An Hour when you are Not Thinking*"

(Chap. 23, 29–24, 43)

LUKE introduces the passage about the sending of God's messengers (11, 49) with the words " Therefore, *the Wisdom of God* says." It seems that we have to do here with a quotation from a lost book of Wisdom. Matthew leaves out the words of introduction because he identifies Jesus outright with " the Wisdom of God." " Wisdom " is the mother-hen calling to her wandering brood. He for whom man was made, has ever been coming into the world, first in the persons of " prophets, wise men and scribes," then in His own Person, and every chapter of the story is stained with blood. The gospel itself begins with the massacre of the innocents, moves on past the murder of John, and culminates in the martyrdom of Jesus. Because mankind had trampled in the dust the innocent blood of so many of the victims of its ignorance already, it was inevitable that men should crucify Him, who was purity incarnate, when He came. That generation, burdened with the responsibility of dealing with the issue and the Person to whom the past history of the race had been leading up and upon whom its future destiny depended, had now made up its mind. They had followed their bent with John, as their predecessors had done with all the others, and " so it must be with the

Son of Man." They would "fill up the measure of their fathers," and involve their children in an inextricable web of doom. It is equally true that they have involved their children in immeasurable blessing; but we shall not see the light until we have, with our evangelist, faced a little longer the heavy darkness of the scenes which made the Passion tragedy inevitable.

We had better paraphrase this tremendous passage before we go any further. "Alas for you, you Pharisee-scribes, impious with all your piety! You keep the tombs of the prophets in repair, you decorate the graves of the saints of other days, saying as you do so, 'Ah! if we had lived in our fathers' days, we should not have been guilty of the murder of God's prophets!' So you agree, do you, that you are really the sons of those prophet murderers? Be quick and finish the work they began! You snakes, you vipers' brood, how can you stir a step to escape damnation! To save you from this I have ever been sending you prophets, wise teachers, men learned in things divine, though I knew that you would be putting some of them out of the way by crucifixion, flogging some of them in your courts and harrying them from town to town, and that the only result of their coming and Mine would be that all the blood shed upon the earth . . . . is to be charged to your account—to *your* account, you men who have lived with Me! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ever busy killing prophets and stoning God's messengers how often would I have gathered your children home to Me, as a hen shelters her brood under her

wings, and you would not come! See, God's house is left to your tender mercies now.* Make what you will of it! When this is over, you will not see Me again till the time comes when you, like My friends the other day, will join in the chorus, 'Praise to Him who comes in Jehovah's name!'" So for the last time He left the Temple and as He was walking away His disciples came up to point out the beauty of its architecture. He said in answer to them, "Yes; cast your eyes over all these buildings; I tell you, not one stone shall be left upon another where they stand to-day!"

We are deprived of one of the finest dramatic effects in the Gospel by the chapter-division at this point. The Temple, like the city and the world, is doomed because Jesus is leaving it. All the sorrow of the centuries is the outcome of the fact that, when the Son came to His vineyard, He was cast out and slain. He is for ever coming into the world, and always when least expected; like a thief in the night, like a householder whose return is so long delayed that the slaves who have been left to keep watch have grown indifferent to their charge, and of those who wait for His appearing the love of many has grown cold. He is always in the world, but never where we expect to find Him. Some will say, as they are saying, "He is in the inner chambers"—the Catholic Church possesses Him in its doctrines and sacraments—while other no less confident voices tell us, "No; He will have nothing to do with your

* The textual evidence for and against the inclusion of the word "desolate" is about evenly balanced; upon the whole, the passage seems more forcible without it.

Churches; He is outside in the desert." Both are right and both are wrong; we are not to believe them, for He is everywhere. The quest of the Jesus of history ever discovers Him afresh and loses Him again when the finder begins to hint that other seekers have not made the same discovery, for when we try to monopolise Him, we lose Him. Uncharitably dogmatising, heresy-hunting, we merely join in the age-long game of Christ-crucifixion. All through the centuries He has been found and lost again, lost through sloth or bigotry. At the last consummation He will come again, flashing suddenly like the lightning upon a world still preoccupied with its old concerns; only those who have kept warm in their hearts the spirit of longing for the appearance of the Bridegroom and the vindication of the Bride, and of compassion for "His little ones" can share His triumph, when at last the King comes to claim His own.

It will be noticed by the discerning that I have said nothing about "Zechariah, the son of Barachiah." There is no doubt that our evangelist has made a mistake here, perhaps, confusing the Zechariah of 2 Chron. 24, 21 ("the son of Jehoiada") with another Zechariah (Zech. 1, 1 or Isa. 8, 2); but Origen quotes the legend that Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, was murdered in the Temple precincts. The matter is not one of great importance. In regard to the 24th Chapter, it should be said that I accept the view that Mark's gospel already had "the eschatological fly-sheet" in the 13th Chapter when our evangelist used it. The general question raised by the eschatology in this Gospel must be left to another chapter.

Chapter X — *The Second Coming*

(Chap. 24, 44–51 and 25, 14–30)

At this point I am venturing for once to disturb our evangelist's generally convincing order. The parable of the reckless slave (24, 45ff) and that of the cautious (25, 1ff) quite clearly belong together. The same refrain is appended in each case ; it may be paraphrased "There men weep, bemoaning their outcast state." The first parable is preceded by a picture of the faithful slave who keeps his wits about him and is promoted. "Which of you is to be the trustworthy and business-like slave to whom his Master will give temporary control of His household, setting him to cater for the others ? Well for the slave whom his Master, when He comes, shall find still standing at his post ! I tell you truly, He will put him in permanent charge of all His property." The parable itself, in idea as well as in language, is suggested by a familiar Eastern tale, the story of Ahikar. Versions of this story have been discovered in five languages, and as fragments of it are found in Aesop's Fables and the Supplementary Arabian Nights' Entertainments, as well as in the Book of Tobit, it is clear that it was exceedingly well known in the time of Jesus. Nadab—his name is given in various forms by our authorities—is introduced at court by his uncle, Ahikar, who is Grand Vizier of the

King of Assyria, as his prospective successor, and proceeds at once "to take more than a son's place in the home and more than a successor's right in the palace." Finally, his intrigues against his uncle culminate in the forging of treasonable letters, sealed with his uncle's seal of office, and shewn to the king. Ahikar is condemned to death, but is saved by the slave to whom his execution is entrusted. He is hidden in an underground chamber beneath his official residence, and there has the maddening experience of hearing overhead the sound of the drunken revels of Nadab, who "drubs" the men and maidens of the household "with a severe drubbing." In answer to his prayers for vengeance, release comes at last, when the King of Egypt threatens to invade Assyria, unless certain absurd demands are complied with. The Sultan longs for his trusted counsellor, and the secret that he is not dead after all is cautiously disclosed. He is produced, washed and trimmed, and soon answers all Egypt's riddles. Then he returns in triumph to take vengeance upon his graceless protégé. The wretched young man is flogged, put in a black hole, and fed with bread and water; then his uncle preaches him a long and lurid sermon. At its close Nadab swells up and bursts in the middle. It is evident that "He shall cut him asunder" means "shall deliver him a cutting rebuke," and is a softened form of "he—the unfaithful servant—shall swell up and burst in the middle." From the same source has come the sentence about eating and drinking with the drunken and beating the men-

servants and the maidservants. The parable told by Jesus follows the older model.

The man does not offend merely by being unready, but by his reckless and bullying behaviour; this may be called the parable of the domineering ecclesiastic. In the Church he is dressed in a little brief authority, and he plays the petty tyrant over the others, as though the house was really his own. Church history provides a melancholy commentary upon the necessity of the warning conveyed by this parable. Every Church has known its ecclesiastical autocrats whose affectations of official prerogative would be grotesque if they were not so disastrous to the man himself, as well as to the Church whose business he administers. The effects of these autocracies are with us still, and we may well support union between the Churches, if only by way of making some atonement for the sins of our fathers. In the Church of Christ any primacy but that of humble service is an usurpation of His prerogative; "one is your leader, even Christ."

The slave of the parable just discussed, if he did not leave his Master out of account altogether, at least put the possibility of His return out of his mind as outside the region of practical politics. The fault of the slave who shares his fate in the second of our two parables is just the opposite; he was so busy thinking about the Second Coming that he was afraid to take any risk, or do anything at all. Luke has a parable of the "pounds," but, according to his version of the theme, there are ten slaves, not three, and they all start on equal terms, and are rewarded

according to the amount of their service. In Matthew's parable of the "talents," on the other hand, the slaves begin with unequal opportunities, but end with an equal reward, the approval of their Master and a share in His triumphal welcome home. By churlishly remaining in the background, with a shyness that is really pride, because we are unwilling to risk failure or humiliation, we shall incur the Master's censure as certainly as if we were for ever pushing ourselves forward.

It is usual in these days for the more progressive among us to discountenance any definite expectation of a visible Second Coming of our Lord, and to leave this doctrine, which has always been a part of our creed, to people to whom nothing else seems to matter very much. This is perhaps one of the reasons why the First Gospel is rather under a cloud at present, while the Fourth which, apart from certain chapters, is much less familiar, is first favourite among the elect; it has comparatively little of this troublesome eschatology. But, whatever our personal preferences may suggest, there is abundant evidence that the thought of the Second Coming meant very much to Jesus, and that His mind turned more and more in that direction, as the time of His Passion drew near. Eschatological material is found in all four gospels; but there is more of it in Matthew than in Mark, more in Mark than in Luke, more in Luke than in John. Luke was almost certainly of Gentile birth, and did not feel comfortable with such material, though he was too honest to leave it out altogether; John spiritualises it, but even in the

Fourth Gospel the primitive material expectation keeps peeping through. We should have expected that, as time went on, and hopes of the speedy coming of the Lord were disappointed, references to it would be interpreted in a purely spiritual sense, or taken as having been fulfilled in some great historical event, such as the fall of Jerusalem; the first course is followed by John, and the second by Luke. But the First Gospel presents a difficulty; in its final form it dates almost certainly from a period subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem, and it is probably later than Luke, though earlier than John. All we can say with any confidence is that in the Palestinian Church the eschatological tradition was stronger and more persistent than at Rome or in Asia Minor.

The suggestion is often made that the strong eschatological bias of Palestinian Christians of the second generation has coloured the First Gospel, and that we must allow for the possibility that comparatively indefinite sayings referring originally to imminent catastrophes have been taken too literally by superstitious people. This is a question upon which it is extremely difficult to pronounce with any assurance, but one cannot help thinking that the probabilities of the case are the other way round. If sayings which had been taken as predicting in unmistakable terms a *speedy* Second Coming had not been fulfilled, the natural thing would have been to explain them away rather than to make their terms more explicit. A good example of eschatological colouring deepening as the gospel-tradition developed

can be found in Mark 9, 1, Luke 9, 27, and Matthew 16, 28. All three gospels agree in the statement that some of those who stood with Jesus then would not taste of death till they had seen something—Mark says "The Kingdom of God having come with power," Luke "the Kingdom of God," Matthew "the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."

Mark's version of the saying might be taken as referring to Pentecost, Luke's is quite general, and we feel that he is not sure of his ground; Matthew's is by far the most definite, least easily explained away. Granted that the First Gospel was given to the world at a time when some of those who stood there had actually died without seeing the expected coming of the Son of Man, is it likely that the writer would have gone out of his way to make a prophecy more definite, the non-fulfilment of which stared him in the face? Luke and John betray their uneasiness with eschatological material; why did not this writer do so too, under the same historical conditions? It will be said perhaps that he regarded the saying about the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom as having been fulfilled already at the fall of Jerusalem, that "the consummation of the age" had taken place when he put his book into its final shape. But he does speak of the fall of Jerusalem, and in very different terms, as, for instance, in 22, 7: "the King sent His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city." In Chap. 24 the time of trouble when "the abominable thing that makes desolate" is to stand "in the Holy Place" is described in detail, and we are warned in v. 26 not to believe those who will

identify the Second Coming with that calamity. No; the final coming in the sky will be *after* that trouble, how long after the very angels in Heaven do not know—the words "not even the Son" are absent in the best texts of Matthew. The Second Coming is to be no mere local conflagration; like the lightning, it is to flash upon the four quarters of the world at once. When the Gospel was published, Jerusalem had been taken, but the stars had not fallen from the sky, and the sign of the Cross had not yet appeared in Heaven; is it likely that any writer would have courted the mockery of a sceptical world by including among the sayings of Jesus the words "*Immediately* after the trouble of those days"—the period of the fall of the holy city—"the sun shall be darkened," when all these things, as a matter of fact, had not happened, unless he was faithfully reproducing what he believed were authentic words of Jesus, and so must go down, let the world say what it would.

While we cannot agree with Schweitzer and Tyrell, that the expectation of a great act of God by which the Kingdom was to be suddenly established formed the central motive of the life and death of Jesus, it was certainly a part of it, and cannot be slurred over without our losing touch with the thought-world of the authentic Jesus of history. This impressive picture of the last things comes from Him, and from no other; it is incomparably superior to the visions of apocalyptic writers, inside or outside the covers of the New Testament, and if the point of view we have learned to adopt towards highly coloured pictures of

the end of the world tempts us to look for reasons why the parables in the 25th of Matthew should not be regarded as authentic, we should distrust the narrowness of our own outlook rather than leap to the conclusion that what does not happen to interest us cannot have appealed to Him.

Chapter XI *The Bridegroom and His Bride*

(Chap. 25, 1–13)

CONVINCING evidence is now to hand that the Bride should come into Matt. 25, 1. We may paraphrase the verse : " When the great hour comes, those who seek to share the King's triumph will be like ten bridesmaids who went out to meet the Bridegroom coming to claim His Bride." The feature common to all His comings is that He arrives when He is least expected. It was so when He first came ; only a few old-fashioned people, like the wise men from the East among the Gentiles, Simeon and Anna among Jews, had not tired of the long delay. Social and religious life had become so highly organised with the passing of the centuries that no place could be found for Him, and the very rumour of His birth was disturbing to Herod, the Rabbis, and the priests alike. Their instinct was to get together, and dispose of this inconvenient Intruder as rapidly as possible. If He will not let them ignore Him, then they must destroy Him, or there is an end of their place and their nation. So they kill and bury Him, but soon discover that He cannot be put out of the way so easily. For, apart from reports of His reappearance, there is now His Bride to be reckoned with ; the company of His lovers is growing, and all the persecutions only foster the Church in which He lives again.

By and by her position becomes secure, and then the same process is repeated within her borders: she has become official, and is so highly organised that the possibility of another intervention of this disturbing Personality begins to be ignored or scouted. Yet always there is the growing number of those who are watching and waiting, and they are the true Bride of Christ, who joins in the Spirit's cry, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

In this chorus the triumphant Church above joins with the suffering Church below, for neither can ever be content until He is crowned where He was crucified. Side by side with the salvation of individual men and women, the redemption of society has its inalienable place in our Christian hope and faith, and from that hope has sprung the doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ, a doctrine amply attested everywhere in the New Testament. It is not enough that the saints should be caught away from the ruin of a perishing world, or that we should go to Him; He must come to us, or, if not to us, to those who represent us when we are gone. He will not force surrender even then, for, if He did, He would not be Jesus. He will not overawe the nations into a reluctant submission, but His appeal will be more challenging than ever, and by the response to it the fate of organised society will be decided. So much at least the definite and reiterated warnings of Jesus seem to imply, though as to the manner or the time of His coming again we are nowhere encouraged to speculate. The one thing that is clear is that it will take the world by surprise. In this

parable wise and foolish bridesmaids alike grow drowsy and fall asleep. Evidently we are not meant to be always thinking of it; we remember that Paul had to tell the Thessalonian Christians to go on with their daily work. The personality of Jesus is so overwhelming that we could never grow to our full stature if we thought of Him as always somewhere just round the corner; we should say, with the woman of Samaria, "When Messiah comes, He will tell us all things; no need for me to worry my head." Meanwhile, though for our sakes the veil is not too often taken away, we have that other inward and strengthening presence, the Holy Spirit, who keeps us ever thinking of Jesus.

All the same, whether we are to go to Him, or He is to come to us, it is our destiny sometime, somewhere, to look into His face. One day for us the air will be thrilling with the cry, "The Bridegroom is coming; go ye forth to meet Him," and we shall wake from our long preoccupations and with trembling hands trim the lantern of our faith and hope, seeking desperately to brace ourselves up to look into the face of Him of whom we have been thinking and talking all our days; then we shall realise that every experience of our lives has been but a preparation for the supreme moment. The older we grow, the more we long for the sight of Him, whom, not having seen, we love, the more we dread His coming, whose eyes are like a flame of fire. How can we be ready? What is meant by the supply of oil, which the sensible bridesmaids kept hidden in reserve for such an emergency? They could go calmly on with the routine of life,

because they knew that they could be ready at a moment's notice. By this secret store is meant something which the world does not see, a hidden fire which may at any time be kindled into flame. There are some who live from hand to mouth, with just enough strength to carry them through their daily task, while there are others who, year after year, through all the time of waiting, when the world about them conspires with their own darker moods to make the possibility of any fresh coming of the Lord ever more difficult to realise, are storing up in the hidden life of their spirits a treasure of sacramental grace.

The idea of the oil goes back to the traditional Jewish belief in the existence of a small flask of holy oil from which were anointed the tabernacle and its vessels, Aaron and his sons, and the whole line of priests and kings during the time of the First Temple. This flask remained undiminished in quantity, and Elijah was to anoint the Messiah with it when He came. Month by month, as we "remember the Lord's death" at His table until He come, we may receive this sacramental grace. By sacramental grace is here meant an inward reinforcement, the effect of which only the process of time can bring to light; as He said, "What I am doing thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." It is always something *given* from an inexhaustible store, never something that we can produce ourselves, by any process of auto-suggestion. It cannot be got ready-made when we want it, borrowed at second-hand, or caught by infection from the mood of others. The "shops" in the parable correspond to Conventions "for the

deepening of spiritual life," which will abound more and more as the Coming draws nearer. They have their uses, but they cannot convey this grace, and the trouble is that, while we are away, trying somehow to get toned up for the great occasion, He may come, and we may miss Him. But no sacrament can mean anything to us that with all our hearts we do not want it to mean. Before our secret life can be fed, we must possess it. Amid all suspense and disillusionment, with unbelief in the Church and out of it all about us, we must never cease to long for the Bridegroom's appearing, and to pray for the manifestation and vindication of the true Bride of Christ, for the visible union of the " blessed company of all faithful people " at the Lord's table. Whatever we may think about the organic union of the Churches, we must never be content without intercommunion, without some united commemoration of the Lord's death by all who call themselves Christians in one place. We shall not have to ask all to agree to our particular form of administration, for that would exclude the Society of Friends, who are more, not less, sacramental in spirit than the rest of us. If any form, such as that of administration by an ordained minister, stands in the way, then, for the purposes of the united service of commemoration, that will have to go. That is comparatively unimportant, while intercommunion itself is, some of us are coming to believe, absolutely vital for any coming of the Kingdom, it is at our peril that we delay it by insistence upon ecclesiastical proprieties; our divisions are not specially unhappy, if we are not divided here. To differ on

sacramental doctrine is perhaps inevitable for men who think and are honest in their thinking; to allow our differences to make us unwilling, even occasionally, to keep them in the background, and meet on ground where we should be lifted high above them all, means that we do not possess the secret without which none of us can be fit to look into the face of Jesus. Once the flame is lit, He will keep it alive until He comes again, as we meet with the few faithful souls at Sacrament, where the union of the two or three is the visible foretaste of the consummate feast, when He shall drink the new wine of fulfilled longing with all His friends, old and new, in the Kingdom of God.

Chapter XII — *The Judgment of the Nations* (Chap. 25, 31–46)

FROM the beginning of the ministry in Galilee the appeal of Jesus had a twofold aspect; His message is addressed first to individuals, then to communities. Ever-widening circles come within the scope of His mission; first the Rabbis and their pupils in the Temple-courts, then the people of Judaea, then one class after another by the lakeside of Galilee, then the Gentiles round Galilee, last of all Jews and Gentiles together in Jerusalem at the passover. But as we draw to the end of the fifth section we begin to realise that, not the Jewish people merely, not even only the Jews and Gentiles then living in or near Palestine, but all the nations in all the centuries, are faced by this decisive challenge. We cannot say: "How unhappy were those men, fated to bear the responsibility of dealing with their destiny at a moment's notice!" or "If we had lived in those days, we should not have been partakers in this murder." It is human nature, not the people of one generation, that has crucified Christ. He does not come in the same way as He came then to other times and peoples, but "the poor" we have "always with us," and He comes to us all in the persons of His "very little brothers," the hungry, the sick, the naked, the prisoner. The final test by which *nations* are

judged is not whether they have recognised Him—He has never been recognised by any *people* in the world's history—but by the compassion or the lack of it revealed in their legislation and their social habits. To this great issue does the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount run out; we were made to see, as we studied it, that we could not get right with God until we had done our part in the effort to get right with men. The same principle is implied when we say that, as we treat the poor, so we should deal with Him, if He came. It is sometimes said that nations have fallen into ruin and perished when they have grown soft; it would be nearer the truth to say that they have perished when they have grown altogether hard. Perhaps the real truth is that the two have always gone together—luxury and callousness, softness with oneself and hardness with other people. At the climax of the Gospel, in the most impressive of the parables, the veil is drawn aside, and we see the King who holds the empires in His hand passing judgment upon the centuries. He does not condemn "the goats" for immorality or idolatry, but simply because they did not think it worth their while to be kind to people who could not contribute to their wealth; in this matter we cannot throw a stone at the people or the generation to which Jesus came in person. Upon the whole the Jews in those days looked after the poor of their own people more efficiently than we do; they have always been pre-eminent in almsgiving. If this is to be the ultimate test, we may well wonder where our own people will stand; at any rate, we may be sure that

our Empire will only live as long as the poor and the sick find life less unendurable because of its existence.

As we have been carried through this greatest of all stories by our evangelist we have been brought up against one surprising discovery after another. There is the discovery of Jesus, the hidden treasure, and His discovery of us, the pearl of great price. As we proceed, surprising reversals meet us at every turn; the world's best left out, the world's worst taken in to the banqueting-hall of the King of the ages, the last coming to be first and the first last. So we have been led on from one surprise to another, until we come to see that this is a characteristic feature of God's dealing with men, that *always* "in such an hour as you think not," the Master of the house of life is coming. Why should this be so? Would He not rather find the slaves waiting up? Would it not be more merciful to let us know beforehand when He may be expected, to give us time to get the house in order? The answer is that His coming only takes us by surprise because we do not in our hearts believe that He will come at all. We cannot fit His intervention into life as we know it, and we are so much accustomed to taking it for granted that we need expect nothing more than what we vaguely call a spiritual influence, that we have learnt to organise our lives on this basis. Whatever we believe about the supernatural in theory, we cannot imagine it coming our way in any disturbingly material form. As the great Gospel sweeps on to its majestic and terrible close, we are made aware that He is here, here in a disconcertingly unescapeable form, that we

need not try to think what we should have done with Him if we had seen Him in the days of His flesh, or wonder what we should do if by any chance we were to live long enough to witness His Second Coming; we see Him every day in the poor whose misery we are only too ready to forget. It is easier to dream of "Jesus as they saw Him," or of Jesus as the world will see Him, than to realise that He appeals to us in the wretchedness which we cannot escape in our streets. All the surprises in which the history of the Kingdom in human life has been so rich, since first men found Jesus and He found them, are to culminate in one final, crashing surprise when the stage will be cleared for the last scene in the drama, and all the nations will be marshalled before the throne of the King none of them have crowned, and some "shall go away into age-long punishment," but the compassionate into "life that knows no death."

Many terrible things are said in the teaching of Jesus about the penalties involved in missing Him, but nothing quite so sombre, so final, as this. It should be noticed, however, that punishment of individual men and women is not in question here—only age-long punishment of *nations*. Whatever we may think about individuals—and there are kind and friendly people in the nation whose record for its callous treatment of the poor and the sick is the worst—age-long punishment of *nations* is a fact of history. What of Spain? or Russia? But in reality we cannot pick out certain nations as specially shocking examples, for the civilised world itself lies under the shadow of a mysterious doom; if this parable is right, we

know why it is so. None of us are left out, none can plead "Not guilty." There is nothing more to be *said;* our evangelist is conscious of this, for he closes the section with a word he has never used on any of his milestones: "When Jesus had finished *all* these words," he says. Is there anything left? Only one thing—the Cross. He hurries on to this one last compensating fact.

Book VI

Chapter I — *The Anointing at Bethany* (Chap. 26, 1–16)

THE first three evangelists agree in maintaining a somewhat tantalising reserve about the family at Bethany. Luke mentions the names of Martha and Mary, but suppresses the name "Bethany" in his story of a supper at their house; he says "they came to *a certain* village." He must have known it was Bethany, for he mentions the place in another connexion. One can scarcely resist the impression that he is deliberately discouraging curiosity. Matthew and Mark tell the story of an anointing in Passion-week, but agree that it took place at the house of "Simon the leper," and they both omit the name of the woman who anointed Jesus, though they must have known it. Sir W. M. Ramsay thinks that the name "Simon" comes from that other story of anointing by a woman, recorded by Luke alone as having taken place at an earlier stage of the ministry and in Galilee. She was a "sinner," and she anointed the Lord's feet in Simon the Pharisee's house. Ramsay thinks that Mark had heard parts of both stories, but did not know that there were two; from the Galilean anointing he got the detail that the host's name was Simon, from the Judaean story that it took place in Judaea during Passion-week. He knew of a Simon who had been a leper, and who lived at

Bethany, and jumped to the conclusion that he was the host in question!

The knot is easily unravelled if we accept the theory, followed, for instance, in Dr. David Smith's "The days of His flesh," that the "sinner" in Galilee was Mary Magdalene, and that Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene were two names for the same woman. In favour of this view it is urged that Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene were both intimate friends of Jesus and yet never appear together, and also that the first mention of Mary Magdalene, "out of whom seven demons had gone forth," comes just after the story of the anointing in Galilee (Luke 8, 2). But "out of whom seven demons had gone forth," does *not* mean that she had lived what was technically known as a "sinful" life, so that we have no substantial warrant for the theory that Mary of Magdala had ever been a "sinner." It is not easy to say precisely what it does mean. The nearest parallels in Jewish literature suggest that the phrase implies that she had suffered from some form of hysteria or intermittent dementia. If, then, the identification of Mary Magdalene with the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in Galilee breaks down, the chief argument for the identity of the two Marys is also gone, for the link created by the two anointings is severed. My own conviction is that the reason for the strange reserve about this family is rather to be found in the person of Lazarus; the name "Lazarus" is probably a pseudonym, and we should look to the Fourth Gospel for the solution of this fascinating riddle.

It will be remembered that one of the duties of Elijah, when he came again, was to anoint the Messiah with the sacred oil. Jesus is now ordained, but by a woman, ordained for a sacrificial death and burial. The other women-friends of Jesus brought spices to preserve His body from decay, after His death. Mary—the Fourth Gospel tells us it was she—" came beforehand," for she had already been initiated into His secret, perhaps when her managing sister was making her noisy preparations for supper, the evening Jesus came to be their guest. It was not simply that she felt a " waft " of death in the air, it was that she had resigned herself to the truth that His other friends had so often been told, but could not bring themselves to face, that He must lay down His life, that it was to be, that nothing could alter His resolution now. For such sacramental uses—by "sacramental" I mean again an act the inner meaning of which only the future can disclose—nothing can be too precious, too expensive! She will not burden Him with futile regrets, but take His word for it that His mysterious purpose can only be accomplished by His death, and that He will rise again, she knows not how, but He has said it shall be so. I imagine that there was one quiet woman at Bethany who was not so much surprised as the others when the Easter message reached her; her brother had come back, and Jesus both could and would.

The disciples—John says it was Judas who suggested their criticism, and indeed we should have guessed that it was he—thought her act wasteful, that the money might have been put to more practical

uses. It is easy to be sarcastic at their expense, but their feeling was quite natural. They had never seen any reason why Jesus should die; they were certain that, if only He could be induced to shake off this inertia, these unspeakably demoralising forebodings, the situation was very far from being hopeless. They did not mean by the "poor" merely the people of whom we think when the word is used. They would mean the cause of the people in their just resistance to the foreign oppressor, to Pilate and Herod with their hordes of publicans and soldiers. Judas wanted the money badly for the revolutionary war-chest which he was getting together for the coup he was meditating—misappropriating, says the fourth evangelist, money from the common money-box, meant for other purposes. While Jesus was dallying at Bethany, talking apathetically, as Judas must have thought, about His death and burial, their enemies and His were active, and those valiant supporters of His, the Galileans, were growing every day more suspicious and uneasy. Had He not powerful friends? Were not they, and hundreds of other determined men, ready to follow Him to death? Was not Pilate himself afraid to interfere with them? If He could only be persuaded to take His courage in both hands, they, who had watched His works of power, had the best reason for knowing Him strong enough for anything. Then why in the world did He persist in talking as though failure were inevitable? It was all very well for a woman to sentimentalise about death, and think about the funeral beforehand: the hour demanded action, instant and strong.

Judas can endure it no longer, but slips away to effect his long premeditated plan, by which he counted on forcing the hand of his Master, and bringing matters to a crisis within the next day or so. We should remember that the disciples were right about the facts of the situation ; there was no reason why Jesus should have died, unless He had made up His mind it was to be. There need have been no bloodshedding at the moment, whatever might have happened later on ; no one would have dared to lay hands upon Him, if He had chosen to raise a finger to stop them. But Mary was right, and they were tragically wrong, because she, unlike the others, simply believed that He knew best ; that is why she has a niche all to herself in the pageant of the Passion-story as it moves down the centuries. From His experiences in the days of His flesh Jesus brought away one precious and unique keepsake. Of all His friends there was one who understood Him ; the surprising thing is that there was one, but it is not so surprising after all that that one was a woman.

Chapter II — *The Last Supper*

(Chap. 26, 17–35)

It is clear that Jesus had more friends in Jerusalem than has generally been supposed. Shadowy figures appear and fade away as quickly, and over the whole drama an atmosphere of mystery broods. Mark tells us that the disciples were bidden to follow a man with a water-pot on his head, and make arrangements for the last supper at the house at which he stopped. A *man* carrying a water-pot on his head is the rarest of sights in a Syrian town; peasant-women carry them to the well, while a man with a skin on his back selling cups of water is a regular feature of town life. Luke agrees with Mark, whereas Matthew begins straightforwardly enough, "Go to the house of . . . .," suddenly drawing back, as if he had almost given a secret away. Evidently he knew the name well enough, but he checks himself, as he is about to mention it. This, of course, whets our curiosity all the more. We think of the synoptic evangelists' reserve about the Bethany family, of the owner of the ass which figured in the Triumphal Entry, of the young man whose adventure on Passion-night is inserted by Mark in his story of Gethsemane (14, 51). For the moment we will refrain from trying to pierce the veil any further, and content

ourselves with the deepening of the impression, which grows stronger as we read the story, that Jesus could have escaped the Cross if He had chosen to do so.

There is a difficulty even about the date of the Last Supper. The time of the paschal meal proper would have been the evening of Friday, the 14th Nisan. It is obvious that, if it was then that Jesus partook of the Passover with His disciples, the Crucifixion must have taken place on Saturday, the 15th Nisan, and this seems impossible for many reasons. The Fourth Gospel regards Jesus as Himself the Paschal Lamb, quoting a testimony to that effect (19, 36), and Paul also takes this doctrine for granted (1 Cor. 5, 7). Moreover, according to John (18, 28), the chief-priests did not enter Pilate's hall when Jesus was arraigned before him, "for fear that they should be defiled, and disqualified from eating the Passover"; so that, if we accept his evidence, they at least had not, the day after the Last Supper of Jesus, eaten their passover yet. Indeed, in spite of Matt. 26, 17, Mark 14, 12, and Luke 22, 8, the words of Jesus in Luke 22, 15—"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before My Passion"—may be taken as hinting that the longing to eat the paschal meal with them had been disappointed. The opinion of scholars is almost unanimous that the Last Supper was not the paschal meal itself, but at most an anticipation of it, held on Thursday evening.

At first sight it would seem that Matthew and Mark agree in suggesting that Jesus pointed out Judas as the traitor. This cannot have been the case, as

Peter would not have allowed him to leave the room, if he had known why he was going. Indeed, John explicitly tells us that only the beloved disciple was told, and that when Judas went out it was generally supposed that he was going on some errand connected with his duties as steward. As a matter of fact the words "the man who has just dipped his hand with Mine in the dish" would not disclose the traitor's identity, for all the disciples had done that; though the narrative is not clear either in Matthew or Mark at this point. All that the phrase means is "My table-companion will betray Me" (compare John 13, 18). Moreover, if that had been the sign, there would have been no need of the questions that follow. In the First Gospel, Judas, who seems singularly free from any sense of shame, asks the question separately, and calls Jesus not "Lord," but "Rabbi"—he is less deferential than the others—and Jesus answers him not by saying "It is," but "You said so—just now." We shall come upon a modification of this curiously evasive phrase again in 26, 64 and 27, 11; it is peculiar in two of the three places to Matthew, but there is something like it in John 18, 37, where Pilate asks Jesus "Are you a King then?" and Jesus answers "You are responsible for using the word king." An interesting discussion is now proceeding as to the exact meaning of the words. Abrahams quotes Rabbinic parallels which almost suggest that they imply denial rather than affirmation. Perhaps "That is still an open question" is the nearest English equivalent here; Moffatt translates "Is it not?" Possibly a challenge

is implied "That depends upon you, Judas." The evangelist is doubtful as to whether Jesus did charge Judas publicly with treason; he may mean us to conclude that He is giving Judas a last chance to escape. If such a question was asked and answered, the exact words used would be drowned in a babel of voices. The disciples would be more anxious to clear themselves than to discover who the betrayer was. Matthew does not add very much to Mark's account of the passing round of the bread and the cup. The words "for the remission of sins" are peculiar to this gospel. By their addition the connexion of the Eucharist, not only with the Levitical ritual, but also with John's water-baptism "for the remission of sins," is made clear; though it is noteworthy that Matthew has left out the words "for the remission of sins" from Mark 1, 4, in speaking of John's Baptism (see Matt. 3, 1). He wishes us to realise that the blood of Jesus does what John's Baptism promised, but could not perform: "This is He that came, not by the water only, but by the water and the blood." The "innocent blood" which stained Pilate's hands, so that all the water poured over them could not make them clean, is to cleanse the hearts of believers. With what splendid dramatic power this idea is worked out in the twenty-seventh chapter we shall see later on. The other feature of the narrative, peculiar to this gospel, is a delicate touch in the next verse: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine," says Jesus, "until I drink it new *with you* in the Kingdom of God"; the words "with you" are found in Matthew only. A moment

before the thoughts of Jesus have been far away. When He said "for many," we may imagine that there was a distant look in His eyes, as though He were gazing down the centuries, from the few who loved Him then to the "many" who would come into the widening circle by and by. But, as always, He comes back to them, and His most sustaining thought is that, in the Consummation as now, He will have His old friends with Him. "Forsake not an old friend," says Jesus, the son of Sirach, "for the new is not to be compared with him. As new wine are new friends; when it is old, you shall drink it with gladness." Jesus had already shewn His sympathy with this sentiment (Luke 5, 39). We can be sure that no new friends would ever quite make up for the loss of Judas, and that the reason why He could not share the cup that night was that one of His old friends was even now betraying Him.—Will the Consummation be complete, if Judas be not there?

But why bread and wine? Perhaps Irenaeus helps us better than most commentators to answer this question. He says: "He took that which is part of His creation, a common loaf, and said 'This is My body.'" Bread stands for two things, for the life that comes by death (John 12, 24), and for the brotherhood of man. Jesus is the Heavenly Bread, the necessary food for the human spirit. But the seed must not only be sown—He had done the sowing: it must die before it can bear fruit—and He would do that, too. But when it has become bread it must be broken before it can be shared, and by the breaking of the body of Jesus His Spirit has become

available, not only for the few whom He drew into outward contact with Himself in the days of His flesh, but to become the inward life of all who, through the ages, shall make Him their own. Matthew has shewn us already how Gentiles as well as Jews contributed to His incarnate nature. We remember the Gentile women in His pedigree; they are all in Him, and He is the life of all. We owe our life to others, for "In this is the saying true, one sows and another reaps. Others have toiled," and we have "entered into their toils." The bread we eat has been made from seed grown and corn reaped by men whose faces we shall never see. Perhaps we shall never enjoy the deepest communion with God until we share the necessaries of life with people outside our own narrow circles, until we have a real "fellowship of the common table."

The wine is the blood of the vine. "From all the trees of the earth Thou hast chosen one vine," says the Jewish author of the Apocalypse of Esdras. Jesus is the choicest fruit of the vine of Israel; they were God's chosen people, because He was to be born of a Jewish woman. By the feet of the vinedressers, His own people, whose glory He is, His blood was trodden out in the dust, but this most unnatural of all murders became the redeeming power of history, because it was not merely a murder; it was God's self-sacrifice. As we look into the cup of water tinged with blood we are almost afraid to drink, but we drink at His command in an ecstasy of wondering love, because we know that what was death to Him is life to us. It is all sacramental: as Mary in one

sacramental act expressed for us what we feel about our self-devoted Lord, so He in one sacramental act expressed what He is to us. In these two sacraments the future history of men's love to Jesus, and Jesus' love for men, is for all time contained.

Chapter III — *Gethsemane*

(Chap. 26, 34–44)

WHEN they have left the lighted room, and have passed over the dark ravine of Kedron to the moonlit slope of the Mount of Olives, Jesus turns to His friends again, and tells them that the long-dreaded parting has come at last. They will all take offence at His behaviour to-night; their devotion to Him, so carefully fostered, will be strained almost to breaking, and they will be scattered. Peter is moved to forget his fear of rebuke, which had haunted him ever since his Master called, or seemed to call him, "Satan." During the last few weeks he had been unusually silent, but he thought the more, and the demeanour of Jesus in these days utterly bewildered him. Sometimes he would seem hopeful, and Peter, in his quick response to his Master's mood, felt hopeful too; the next moment He said something at which his followers' spirits went down to zero again. Try as he would, he could not understand, but he had been consoling himself with the thought that the time would surely come soon—the sooner the better, thought Peter, for anything was preferable to this weary futile thinking—when He would need His friends again, and then would come their opportunity. But His suggestion that they were going to desert Him, just when He needed them most, seemed

cruelly unjust to Peter, and he breaks out into passionate protest. Everything seemed to be changed these days, His Master most of all; but one thing could never change—he was sure of his own loyalty, and the others would say the same. Instead of withdrawing His statement, however, Jesus makes it more explicit still, and applies it directly to Peter, and he is shocked beyond measure, and cries "Even though I must die with you, I will never disown you, never!"

The words "Jesus with them" in v. 36 are found in Matthew alone, and it will be worth our while to notice the delicate art with which our evangelist uses the word "with" in the course of the next few verses. In v. 38 we read: "Stay here and keep awake *with Me*"—and again the words "with Me" are found in Matthew only. In v. 40 the word occurs for the third time: "So you could not keep awake *with Me*," and once more the words "with Me" are peculiar to our Gospel. Jesus had chosen twelve men to be "with Him" (Mark 3, 14), to become His companions and confidential friends. But, as He drew near to the Cross, they could not keep step with Him, and He could not wait their leisure. So far the sheer force of His personality has kept these unequal friends together, but now they have gone as far into the dark as their faltering steps can carry them and Jesus is chiefly anxious to spare them any more. Indeed, how could they be expected to understand? They knew their Bibles well enough to be aware that the Scripture said—that would mean to them God said—"Cursed"—under God's curse—"is everyone that hangs on a tree," and now they are following a

Master, to whom they have entrusted their lives and fortunes, who had told them repeatedly that He was to hang upon a tree! The suggestion was unspeakably shocking, for the Bible could not be wrong. It speaks volumes for the devotion of these disciples and for the power of Jesus that they followed as long as they did. Now He must go on alone to die "a cursed death," but so far He has been sustained by the vision of the time when, the dark hour passed, He would join them again and once more travel

> "The happy highroads where He walked,
> And will not come again."

Then He will be at leisure to keep pace with them who could never keep pace with Him. We shall pass from "So you could not keep awake *with Me*" to "I *with you* all the days."

So they go on the last of all the walks they had taken together on this side of the Cross, and the disciples draw round Him, for the city, usually so silent at night, is broad awake, and there are strange whispers and shadows about them. They had been told that there was a traitor among them; this was demoralising, for it seemed as though you could trust nobody these days, but at least they will be ready. For the first time for weeks they are walking side by side with Him, as they had done in Galilee, and Matthew marks this last rally by the words "Jesus with them." But at the gate of Gethsemane they stop again, and Jesus insists that only three of them are to go any further; Peter, James, and John are taken into the garden, and disappear under the shadow

of the trees. When they are out of sight of their friends, He bids them sit down, while He Himself goes over to the other side of the garden to pray. They had watched Him at prayer before, but it had never been like this ; the place seemed to be haunted, Jesus Himself possessed. Was He actually under some mysterious curse ? They could hear His terrible half-suppressed sobbing, see Him prostrate on the ground in agony. Peter longed, we may be sure, to go and comfort Him, but he dare not, for he remembers what happened the last time he had tried. Worst of all is this deadly weariness. His nerve had gone under the strain of these haunting doubts, this long suspense ; he has lost his sleep in this stifling city, and all day and all night long there had been this weary, weary thinking, round and round with no relief, and never getting any further. But he is still a healthy man, and soon nature has her way, and he is fast asleep ; we wonder what his dreams were. He wakes to find Jesus standing over him, with the marks of the agony He had been through plainly to be seen in His face, but kindly making excuses for them : "I know you would, if you could, but how tired you are !" Perhaps the apocryphal tradition which makes Jesus apply these words to Himself is not far wrong. No more impatience with their slowness now, only an infinitely tender understanding, for it was the same with Him too—"the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak." Well, they must try harder to keep awake this time ; He needs them, and had not they been counting on His needing them ? It will help Him in His struggle to have them somewhere

near a little while longer; it will not be long—only one hour, and then the chance to help Him will be gone. In the garden of Gethsemane, as on the mountain of Transfiguration, in His agony as in His rapture, He will have these three friends of His near, but this time not too near. On Mount Hermon He could not have them near enough, and when they began to feel out in the cold, "He *drew near* to them, and touched them" (17, 7). This time they must pray, and what are they to pray for? That they may be kept out of the crisis that is coming, He says; but that was the last thing that they wanted! Whatever was coming, their one ambition was to share it with Him. How could He expect them to pray for a thing they did not want? More bewildered than ever, but too tired to think any longer, they fall asleep once, twice, more, and the heavy hour drags itself out. Matthew's description of the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane is more restrained than that given in the other Synoptic Gospels. Matthew says "He began to be"—the word "began" may either suggest that it was a new thing for Jesus to show such extreme discomposure, or that the tension ceased, as the prayer went on—"distressed and unlike Himself," Mark (14, 33), "He began to be bewildered and unlike Himself"—or, as Codex Bezae reads, "utterly worn out." In the second prayer, moreover, Jesus does not, according to Matthew, pray again that the cup may be removed, but only says: "If this cup cannot pass without My drinking it, Thy will be done"—we are reminded of the prayer which, in happier days, Jesus had taught us to repeat every morning. After all, this is holy

ground, and commentary seems almost profane. We cannot tell what was the bitterest ingredient in the cup of mortal sorrow which Jesus was drinking. The despair of Judas, the doom of His country, the knowledge that human nature was condemning itself by the transactions of those hours to the long agony of the centuries—all were there, and He knows now what will be the end of it for Him. He is choking for breath; He cannot live much longer in a world where love and pity seem to be lying dead, killed by jealousy. The sense of His Father's nearness had been life to Him, and now already He seems far away. He is sick for home, yet He knows that He must stay; He could not leave men to their fate. Not all the words of Jesus about the doom of sin have such power to overwhelm one's imagination as the one fact that He must say, as the sin of the world draws in upon Him, "Not Mine, but Thine"—that there is a barrier already set up between the Father and the Son; we have come in between!

Chapter IV "That the Scriptures may be fulfilled."
(Chap. 26, 45–56)

THE words "Sleep on now, and take your rest,' I take to mean that Jesus really wishes Peter, James, and John to sleep the night out in the recesses of the garden, and so miss the painful scene that must follow. But they will not take the hint, and so He goes on, "Arise, we must be going." They stumble to their feet, and as they move out of the shadow of the trees, their eyes, still heavy with sleep, are half-blinded by the sudden flash of lanterns and torches: the great hour has come.

It was argued in "Jesus as they saw Him" that the kiss with which Judas greeted his Master cannot have been seriously meant as a mark of identification. The suggestion was made that it was meant as a signal to Jesus that Judas was really on His side, and that this was the opportunity to use His power and overwhelm His enemies, whose whole available force had been got together for the purpose of such a demonstration. It is not my intention to discuss the riddle of Judas Iscariot here, but it may be worth mentioning that the Western texts often call him "Judas Scariotes," and it is by no means impossible that the word "scariotes" is connected with the "sicarii," translated "assassins" in our versions of Acts 21, 38. It will be remembered that they were a fanatical Jewish

sect who appeared in the time of Felix, and were notorious for their habit of stabbing their political opponents with daggers concealed beneath their cloaks, and that Paul was at first suspected of being an Egyptian leader of theirs, who was wanted by the police. There is no evidence for the existence of such a sect before the time of Felix, but it is quite likely that Judas got this name because he was responsible for the arming of the others (we remember that Peter had a sword, or more probably a knife, under his cloak that night) just as Judas' companion, Simon, was called the "Cananean," or "zealot," though the "zealots" did not appear as a distinct party till A.D. 66. My conviction that Judas was primarily a political intriguer, is strengthening.

When we come to the reply of Jesus to this greeting, we have some real illumination to offer. Luke has "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Matthew, the very puzzling words "Comrade, why are you here?" The reason why the commentators have found a difficulty in them is that the Greek, according to the ordinary rules of Hellenistic grammar, should mean "Comrade, for the thing which you have come;" in other words, the relative pronoun, not the interrogative is used. Till lately, no clear example of the use of "which" for "what?" had been found; that is why the Revisers tried to make sense of it by inserting the word "do"—"Do the thing for which you have come." But five glass drinking cups are in existence, all coming from Syria, and dating from the first century A.D., with the

inscription inscribed upon them in Greek, "Comrade, why are you here? Be merry." The words in Matt. 26, 50, are precisely the same, except that there is no trace of "Be merry."

The newly discovered cups which date from the first century A.D., settle the meaning of our text, for the inscription must mean, "What are you here for, comrade? To have a good time? Well, set about it then!" Here is a last most moving appeal to Judas; Jesus is quoting, it may be, the very motto inscribed on the Holy Grail itself, the cup of which they had been drinking only an hour or two before. We can put the matter best by slightly adapting a French saying: "Que fais tu dans cette galère?"

This discovery, of which I heard from Dr. Deissmann, has an important bearing upon the question of the language used by Jesus. This is a Greek motto, and it seems incredible that it should have been quoted to Judas by Jesus in Aramaic, and then translated back by the evangelist into the very peculiar Greek idiom found on the cups themselves. Upon the whole, it confirms one's impression that Jesus was Himself bilingual. When we read in Acts (4, 13) that Peter and John were "unlearned" men, the phrase means that they could not write Greek, not necessarily that they could not understand colloquial Greek. The fact, authenticated by trustworthy tradition, that Peter took Mark about with him as his dragoman, or interpreter, probably means that Peter found it difficult to express himself in Greek, not that he knew none at all. Such considerations are reassuring, for doubt has often been expressed as to whether we have

any right to lay much stress upon delicate nuances in the Greek of the gospels, because these fine shades were unknown in Aramaic, in which, it was assumed, the sayings of Jesus were originally uttered. On the face of it, it would seem that Jesus must have been able to make Himself understood in Greek, if He sought to appeal, as it has been argued in these pages that He did, to all classes resident in or near Palestine. Some scholars seem inclined to minimise His intellectual energy, surely a very irrational proceeding ! It is well to remember that three languages would constantly be heard in Jerusalem ; they were Greek, Latin, and Aramaic : the inscription on the Cross was in all three.

We have still to deal with the " comrade." It has already been pointed out that the word in the New Testament, is peculiar to the First Gospel and the suggestion has been made that, in the two other places (20, 13 and 22, 12) in which it occurs—it is a pity that our versions have not differentiated this word from the word rightly translated " Friend " in Luke 11, 5 and 14, 10—reference is implied to Judas. The idea that Judas was the " comrade " of Jesus comes from the Old Testament via the Testimony book. Apparently there was a Judas section in the Testimony book almost from the beginning ; John 13, 18, as well as Acts 1, 20 and the text quoted here, found a place in it. In the First Gospel the reference is to Psa. 55, 13—"It was thou, a man mine equal, my comrade and my familiar friend." If we put the three verses in the First Gospel together, we can trace in the words of Jesus Himself

in outline the process by which Judas arrived at his betrayal of Jesus. In 20, 13 he is the workman who had a grievance because he had received the same wages as men who had worked only one hour, the least strenuous hour of the day; Peter had come into the service later (see above, p. 197) and now had been promised "the keys of the Kingdom"—"Thou hast made '*him*' equal to us, who have borne the heat and burden of the day." When we come to 22, 12 the trouble has gone further with him; his jealousy has settled down upon him so heavily that he is destroying the fellowship by his mere presence "without the wedding-garment"; unless his mood changes, and changes quickly, he must go. The disciples would not have been for ever quarrelling as to who was the greatest, unless there had been a mischief-maker among them. Judas persists, despite all the appeals and warnings of Jesus, and treads to the end the path of jealous ambition to disillusion and suicide.

Many of us can sympathise with the good Abbé Oegger, of whom Anatole France tells us, who could not endure the idea that the soul of Judas was in hell, suffering endless torments; for, he argued, the traitor's kiss was one of the necessary instruments of the Passion. According to the belief of the Abbé, Judas was bound to come into the world, and to go to his own place, to fulfil the prophecies. We cannot endure the thought that Judas could have been merely a means to an end, and are convinced that Jesus cannot have chosen him, knowing that he would betray Him. But Matthew, Mark and John agree

that it was of the fulfilment of scripture that Jesus was thinking when He accepted the fact of His betrayal and gave Himself up to His foes. According to the First Gospel another possibility had already passed through the mind of Jesus, only to be instantly rejected, before Peter in his turn tried to cut through the web in which his Master was being caught. We may imagine, if we will, all sorts of reasons why Jesus came to see that He must die; all that the gospels tell us is that He went to the Cross "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." Whenever He speaks of His Passion, one passage or another from the Old Testament is in quotation or reminiscence on His lips; from the Temptation onwards, every alternative is steadily rejected in words taken from Scripture. By the Wisdom passages He came to see the meaning of His Incarnation, by the songs of the suffering Servant of God the necessity and the purpose of His atoning death. It was not that He had a "plan of salvation" ready made from the beginning, but that He died, because He chose to die, or at least chose the time and manner of His death, in sheer obedience to the will of His Father as revealed most clearly in the Old Testament. And, as with the great issue, so with all that led up to it, He did not choose Judas because He knew from Scripture that someone would betray Him, and Judas was the man to do it; the very idea is profane. But, once Judas was chosen, and had entered the path which led to the betrayal of his Master, Jesus had learned to accept the fact that it was to be. He will warn him, appeal to him in every way that the ingenuity of His

love could suggest. One thing He will never do; He will not stop him. A hint to Peter would have been enough. The enemies of Jesus, murderously inclined as they were, were mortally afraid of Him, and Pilate would have been only too glad to have washed his hands of the whole affair before, instead of after, he was finally implicated. Without the heavenly succour, which in the last resort would, Jesus Himself tells us, have been forthcoming, He might have escaped the toils of the very timorous hunters who were pursuing Him. But to all such considerations as these His one answer is "How otherwise, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that this must be so?"

Chapter V — *The Silence of Jesus*
(Chap. 26, 57–75)

ACCORDING to the Fourth Gospel, two trials took place before the Jewish authorities on Friday morning, the first at the house of Annas, the high priest's father-in-law and possibly his deputy or examining judge, a caucus meeting of those most bitterly hostile to the Prisoner, the second, a more official but quite irregular meeting of the whole Sanhedrin, under the chairmanship of Joseph Caiaphas, the nominal high priest. Matt. 27, 1 and Mark 15, 1 seem to hint at two stages of the trial, and the suggestion is confirmed by the fourth evangelist who has inside knowledge. Caiaphas was in a hysterical condition : so we should judge from John 11, 49, 50, where his remarks cannot be called coherent. Annas was the older and harder man, and was more to be trusted to carry things with a high hand against the Prisoner. John 11, 51 has the curious phrase in reference to Caiaphas, " this he said not of himself "—compare John 18, 34 where a somewhat similar suggestion is made by Jesus Himself about Pilate. Perhaps the unnamed " other disciple, the friend of the high priest " (John 18, 15) had been using his influence, and in John 11, 49 Caiaphas is giving a distorted version of a saying of Jesus about dying for the people that had been reported to him. In any case, Caiaphas does not

appear to be trusted by his party, and the direction of affairs is quietly taken out of his hands.

If the testimony of the Fourth Gospel is to be accepted, it was Annas, not Caiaphas, who challenged Jesus to declare Himself. Dr. Abrahams has lately raised the question whether we have not been too hasty in assuming that the Sanhedrin broke all its rules of procedure at the trial of Jesus. He regards it as doubtful whether the admirable rules laid down in the Mishnah and intended to ensure a fair trial for a prisoner charged with blasphemy, were in existence so early as this trial. In any case, the search for hostile witnesses, the browbeating of the Defendant and the condemnation by acclamation were a travesty of any kind of justice, and apologists for Judaism do not try to justify these proceedings. In the Talmud we are told that at the trial of Jesus two witnesses were hidden in a room adjoining the chamber where He sat, and that a lamp was lit over Him so that they could see as well as hear Him. This way of obtaining evidence is justified on the ground that He was not only an apostate, but had led others astray. As the Talmud asserts that He was stoned, and afterwards hung, not crucified, and that His death took place at Lydda, not Jerusalem, the information it provides us with as to the details cannot be regarded as trustworthy, but the passage (T. Sanh. 10, 11) does suggest that there was some irregularity about the trial of Jesus, and that the procedure adopted needed justification.

The two witnesses required were at last found. They produce a garbled version of

an authentic saying; long ago (John 2, 19) He had said "Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it up in three days"; now it has become "I will destroy this Temple"—a very different thing; Jesus was already suspected of being no friend to the Temple. The priests had not dared openly to criticise His drastic purge on Monday, for the rapacity of the house of Annas was a byword, and their profiteering was intensely unpopular. But the destruction of the Temple was another matter; they felt that they had at last got evidence which would justify them in the strongest action. But once more we cannot help being impressed with the difficulties they encountered in proceeding against Jesus. Judas cannot have told them much, or they would never have needed to make a frantic search for incriminating evidence. Their whole demeanour is that of men who are lawless and cruel, because they are horribly afraid, and feel acutely the insecurity of their own position.

Annas is in a desperate hurry, and there is no official dignity in his vehement challenge: "Art Thou the Christ?" According to Mark, Jesus answered "I am," but our evangelist corrects him, giving us, as in the reply to Judas at the table (26, 25) the elusive and difficult phrase "You say so"; not a flat denial, nor yet a direct affirmative. The sense would appear to be: "You can put it in that way, if you like; what I would rather say to you is that henceforward you shall all of you see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of God and coming *on* the clouds of Heaven." Jesus does not deny that

He is "the Son of God," but He nowhere affirms it in so many words—even in John 9, 35 the best reading is "the Son of Man." He speaks several times of "the Son" and "the Father" almost in the same breath, so that there can be no question that the Gospels agree that He did claim to be Son of God. All the more remarkable is the fact that, nowhere except in Mark 14, 62, does He directly call Himself the Son of God. Indeed, when He is called Son of God, He invariably replies with "Son of Man" (Matt. 16, 16, 27; John 1, 49, 51). The swift and confident reply to the challenge recorded by all three Synoptic Gospels in almost identical terms proves decisively that Jesus was never more certain of His speedy Second Coming than He was on the eve of His Passion.

Even more important from our present point of view, is the fact that, according to Matthew, He said "coming *on*"—not "with," as Mark and Luke—"the clouds of Heaven." If our evangelist is right, this involves as direct an assertion of divine prerogatives as the claim to forgive sins (9, 6). Even in the Book of Enoch, where the Son of Man is a supernatural figure, there is nothing like this. Only God can ride *on* the clouds; His heavenly messengers come *with* the clouds; "He" alone "maketh the clouds His chariot" (Psa. 104, 3). We cannot be sure that Matthew is right against the others in this detail, but His account certainly makes Annas' exclamation "That was blasphemy" more natural; now at last they have caught Him, after all His evasions, and their glee breaks out in an outburst of savagery, which

leaves a stain upon the Great Sanhedrin the years can never efface. It will be noticed that Matthew omits the blindfolding of Mark 14, 65.

Meanwhile Peter's agony is coming to its climax. He has fled with the others, but, unlike the others, he pulls himself together after a time and turns to follow once again. By the favour of another man, he is admitted into the courtyard of the high priest's house, where the second trial is being held. There is a displacement in the text of the Fourth Gospel at this point. It is probable that John 18, 15–18 should come in between vv. 24 and 25, as Peter cannot very well have sat and warmed himself in the courtyard of both houses!

The Synoptic Gospels make the denials take place while the first trial is going on. It is probable, upon the whole, that it was Caiaphas' official residence to which Peter came, and that the first trial was over when he arrived on the scene. He had spent the time, we may imagine, wandering about in a dazed condition, his brain in a fever. When he does appear, his self-control has altogether gone; the girl at the door notices his flushed and working face and identifies him at once as one of the condemned Man's followers. The extravagant boasts of the Galileans with their ridiculous procession the other day, and its still more absurd and futile anti-climax was the talk of the town, and the masters had been having their fun with this sorry King in the hall; why should she do not a little bear-baiting too? What Peter's thoughts were Matthew reveals to us in one of his dramatic phrases: "he sat . . . . to see the end"

(26, 58), the end of all his dreams of being a great man. Then he would go back to his trade again, and try to pretend it had never happened. But he is not to be left in peace even now and the girl's pert challenge is the last straw. To have dreamed of hurling Caesar from his throne, and to come to this—to be the helpless bait of serving men, of a mere chit of a girl! Once more he lashes out, this time not in defence of his Master, but against Him. Why had He led them so far, only to surrender at the critical moment and, when they tried to make a stand, to snub them for their pains! If He had no use for them when they were here, why bring them here at all? He looks round furiously at the circle of contemptuous faces, and, like a beast in a net, struggles to get free, somehow, anyhow—his one desire to get away from these horrible townspeople, back to the sunny lake and a trade in which a man can at least do something except stand about, get in the way, and be humiliated every time he tries to make himself useful! We need not dwell upon the details of the scene or the small differences between the Gospel accounts. We would rather remember that Peter's dialect did not betray him at Pentecost; and that though now, because she noticed his nervousness, a servant-girl jumped to the conclusion that he had been with Jesus, it was not long before her betters, seeing his boldness, came to the same conclusion for another reason. The cock crowing is enough to bring Peter to his senses; slowly the cloud lifts from his tired brain, and it all comes back. Jesus had said it would be so, and so it had been; Jesus

had prayed for him, and he could not get away and be as though the Master of his soul had never come into his life. As his obsession leaves him a desperate passion of remorse sweeps in upon his heart and, shaken with sobs, he somehow manages to get out, and away.

The evangelist has left us with a deepening impression of tragic darkness. Everyone feels it : Judas, Caiphas, Peter, friends and enemies alike are like men possessed, none of them knowing what they say or do. We watch Peter, asleep when he should have been awake, feverishly active when he should have been quiet, disappearing into the dark, to reappear an hour or two afterwards in the firelight, to rap out in a mad fit of exasperation words he does not mean, then waking up to realise what it is that he has said and disappearing into the dark again, a broken-hearted man. The contrast between the silence of Jesus and the talkativeness of Peter is very impressive. Still more so is the fact that everyone but the Master Himself is moving in a maze ; His step alone is. confident and strong, and the light is still about Himn We have now to see how the darkness camedow upon Him also.

Chapter VI — *"Innocent Blood"* (Chap. 27, 1–26)

At the beginning of the Passion story in the First Gospel we are shewn a few men whispering in a corner, plotting to rid themselves of an inconvenient Stranger; then in a moment a power of darkness, in some mysterious way set free by their action, sweeps down upon the stage and all the actors except One are seen to be mere puppets, chattering volubly, gesticulating wildly, but puppets all the same. The terror comes upon Judas first; "knowing that he was condemned, he was stricken with remorse . . . and went away and hanged himself."

The first evangelist is, perhaps deliberately, ambiguous here. Did Judas realise the fact that Jesus was condemned, or that he himself was condemned? Probably both Jesus and Judas are meant. If we could be sure that Jesus was referred to, we should be free to regard it as finally settled that, according to Matthew at least, Judas had not expected Jesus to be condemned. His first plan had miscarried; to his intense surprise and mortification, Jesus had given Himself up without a blow; Judas had counted upon the miraculous powers of his Master being used in the last resort. But surely even then the position was not hopeless, for there were sympathisers in high places; the high priest himself was friendly

with one of the disciples. We can imagine Judas going to Caiaphas and being told that he could do nothing, as all the other members of his class were hostile to the Prisoner. Then there were the Galileans, those fanatical supporters of Jesus; after the experiences of other years, Pilate would not venture to resist them, for he had burnt his fingers badly before in his dealings with them. But as he moved about among them Judas is made to realise that this support has failed him, too; the surrender in the garden has spoilt everything. Word has already gone round that money had changed hands, and suspicion is in the air. At last he gives up hope, and storms his way past all the barriers to the Hall of Hewn Stone where the Sanhedrin is sitting. There he implores the chief-priests to take back their accursed money, and, when they will not listen, flings the coins down on the floor, and goes away to hang himself in an agony of remorse and despair. We need not pay much attention to the alternative story of the end of Judas told by Peter (Acts 1, 15ff); the true facts had not come to light then.

Then comes the turn of the priests; in spite of their callous dismissal of Judas, they have got "blood" upon the brain too. "You see to it," they say to Judas; "*you* see to it," says he to them: each is struggling to shake off the burden of guilt and doom upon the other. A little later on Pilate is joining in the same futile refrain. "You see to it," he says, as he washes his hands. Indeed, "who would have thought the . . . . Man had so much blood in Him?" The blood is already alive

and clamouring. The land they buy is tainted too; it is called the "field of blood" to this day. Here comes one of the touches which we have learned to expect in this Gospel. If it had been in Shakespeare instead of in the New Testament, it would have been acclaimed long ago as a stroke of consummate genius, but the fact that this Gospel is the most important book in the world has set the critics so busy dissecting it that they have been blind to the fact that it is also a masterpiece of dramatic genius. "They bought with it the potter's field, to bury strangers in." This is the story of the Stranger who was no Stranger, of the man who was buried and could not be buried.

Next, Pilate's wife is drawn into the net of doom. The very house is haunted. Like Lady Macbeth she is dreaming of blood, though, unlike her, she is innocent. Then Pilate: what had come over him? He had committed murders enough before; why worry about one dreaming fanatic the more? Anyhow, it was the business of the Jews, not his, and the mob must be satisfied somehow. Probably he made his offer to release one prisoner as a matter of policy at first; but from that point of view it did not matter to Pilate whether they shouted for Jesus Christ or Jesus Barabbas, as long as they were induced to go home and leave him in peace for another year. Perhaps he had been approached already by the beloved disciple or Judas or both, for in John 18, 34 Jesus Himself gives a hint that "others" had been talking. But as the trial goes on, Pilate becomes a partisan; he is impressed in spite of himself. Matthew emphasises

this by quietly adding "greatly" in v. 14. When all his efforts are in vain, his self-command altogether gives way, and he collapses into melodrama like the rest, but not all the water can ever sweeten those hands of his, and he knows it. Like Lady Macbeth, they are all busy washing their hands of Him, Peter, Judas, priests, Pilate, and all in vain. "With one chain of darkness were they all" except One, "bound." On that bright spring morning "the whole world beside was enlightened with clear light, and occupied with unhindered works; while over them alone was spread a heavy night, image of the darkness which should afterwards receive them. But yet heavier than that darkness were they unto themselves," for "if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is the darkness?"

The climax comes when "all the people," Galileans and inhabitants of Jerusalem alike, men and women from every part of the happy and unhappy land, whose roads and towns He had made sacred by His presence, and whose sick He had healed, "all the people" whom He had come to save "from their sins" (1, 21), feel the spell upon them, too. They are visited by the same "sudden and unlooked-for fear" but shout, to keep their courage up, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." It is, rightly interpreted, a cry of panic, for why "upon our children"? They were not unaccustomed to murder, for the history of Palestine in that generation was as bloodstained as the history of Ireland has been in ours: Josephus is full of it. Was it the memory of what Jesus had been to them, or just that

they caught the obsession by contagion from the others? Anyhow, they are possessed. The chief-priests have seen their opportunity when Pilate's attention was distracted by the message from his wife, and persuaded the crowds, who, in their mood of savage disappointment with Jesus, did not need much persuading, to shout for Barabbas. His name too, according to a probably reliable tradition, was Jesus. He at least had done something else beside talking, but *this* Jesus! They were sick, they told each other, of His parables; He had sold the people, and that was all there was to it! And yet they knew in their hearts that it was not all, and there is panic and a suggestion of remorse in their voices, as together they did what none of them would have dared to do alone, and clamoured for His blood.

The evangelist has been leading us up to this point step by step, and we must stop a moment to look backwards and forwards. For as we listen to this frantic shout, something tells us that the darkness is beginning to lift, that the intolerable tension is relaxed a little. For it is true that from this most reckless of all curses has come, without changing a letter, the prayer which the best among us may reverently take upon his lips, when no other prayer avails any longer. It has inspired a thousand Christian hymns, and the people who find fault with the hymns with "blood" in them only betray the poverty of their imagination. Before talking of crudities, we should try to appreciate the greatness of an idea which has for all the centuries been the

medium by which believers have sought to express their adoration of the love of God in the death of Jesus.

I do not intend to expound the doctrine of "Salvation by similars" here, for I have tried to do so at some length in "Jesus as they saw Him" already (pp. 275–279). For the moment we must be content to feel that the darkness that weighs upon our spirits as we read the 27th of Matthew is beginning to lift; it is leaving us—to gather upon Him.

Chapter VII — *The Release of the Spirit*

(Chap. 27, 1–26)

GREAT play has been made with the fact, recorded by Philo, that a Jewish madman named Carabbas was mocked in Alexandria by the mob, was called Maran, that is, "our lord," and presented with a linen crown instead of a diadem, while a mattress was wrapped round his naked body to serve for a royal robe and a stick of papyrus was thrust into his hand as his sceptre. Attention has been drawn to the likeness of the names Carabbas and Barabbas, and the fantastic theory has been suggested that the whole story of the trial and mockery of Jesus has been developed out of the fact that Roman soldiers made game of a "king of the Jews" in Alexandria! The credulity of scepticism could no farther go, and the suggestion can be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. It is more important for us to notice how skilfully the evangelist suggests that the action is now to be concentrated upon Jesus; "they gathered *against Him* the whole cohort"—the words "against Him" are found in Matthew alone. To the rough Gentile soldiers Jesus is at first just another Jewish puppet-king, an ideal butt for their horse-play. Before the end of the Passion story even they are impressed; "After all this was the Son of God." Matthew rightly corrects Mark's "purple" to "scarlet robe";

purple was only used by those who claimed imperial rank.

When they have had their fill of mockery, the procession winds slowly through the narrow streets. Till He is safely on the Cross, the enemies of Jesus are silent, for they are still afraid. So Jesus leaves the city behind, as He had left the Temple, and it is not until they are outside the gate that He finds a man to help Him, and he an African conscript! "Run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem and see . . . . if you can find a man," says Jeremiah; the man who carried the Cross for Him was found *outside* the doomed city. He was the last but one of the surprising discoveries that Jesus made in the days of His flesh. Matthew is still thinking of the songs of the Suffering Servant of God, and so the "myrrhed wine" of Mark's story becomes "wine mingled with gall" (Ps. 69, 21). Mark is probably right here, for "myrrhed wine" was a narcotic offered to those sentenced to crucifixion, but the first two Gospels agree that He refused it; His work was not finished yet. When at last He is securely fastened to the Cross, "numbered with the outcasts," His enemies forget their terrors of an hour or two before, and revenge themselves for them by taunting cries. They are still harping upon His saying about the Temple, for His campaign against it was the one thing the priests could never forgive. By and by they grow bolder still, and challenge Him to come down from the Cross; we wonder if some of them did not half expect Him to do so! It has not been sufficiently realised that, to friends and enemies of Jesus alike,

this was the decisive question. If He was what He professed to be—and no one could have been in any sort of association with Jesus without having a lurking suspicion that there was after all something in His claim, however bitterly he resented His words and deeds—God would not allow Him to be crucified. If He was not delivered, that settled the matter, for infallible Scripture said "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree" (Deut. 20, 23); those who hated Him were right, and those who loved Him desperately wrong, if sunset came and He was not delivered. To make assurance doubly sure there comes the despairing, forsaken cry. To the disciples the darkness would now seem to be the black cloud of the wrath of God, the last proof that they had staked their souls upon a delusion. To appreciate the depth of their despair from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning, we must realise this one crushing fact. There was no escape: Scripture said it was so, and now they had heard it from His own lips!

The darkness has been lifted from His enemies, to gather upon the head of Jesus. In the old days He and His had been in the circle of light, while all about them had been the gathering darkness of lost humanity; now He and they are in the dark, and His enemies are exultant, proved triumphantly right. Afterwards His friends came to see, as Paul explains to us (Gal. 3, 14), that Jesus was indeed under a curse, but it was our curse. There were two great curses in Scripture, one directed against the man who did not abide by all that was written in the law of God (Gal. 3, 10). In that curse all but He were

involved; the darkness we have watched coming down upon humanity in the earlier part of the chapter is the burden of that curse, from which He alone is free, for He alone never disobeyed His Father's will. Because, argues Paul, He did not come under the one curse, and He is willing to share our doom, whatever it be, He came under the other. We should not explain the mystery of the atoning death of Jesus as Paul does, for we are not bound to the letter of Scripture as he was, but we shall come nearest to understanding as much as it is given us to understand of the mystery of the Atonement, if we follow the clue he offers us. In this Gospel we have watched the inner darkness of jealousy, pride and greed, all that makes men shrink from Jesus, and, when they cannot get far enough away, strike wildly out against His tormenting presence, somehow, anyhow, to be rid of Him, become an outer darkness enveloping first the Temple, then the city, then the world. First His enemies are blind, because none are so blind as those who will not see, and then they are blind because they cannot see. We must bear in mind that these murderers of Jesus represent all but a very few of all the men and women who have ever lived. It is not that God in wrath condemns mankind to an unending doom; this is how sin works out, and we are all tainted. The Kingdom which Jesus came to bring is impossible while men are what they are, proud and greedy and jealous, and the only alternative to the Kingdom is, in the long run, the darkness of despair. He has, so far, been living in a world where these things are unthinkable, while we live in a world

where they are normal, taken for granted. But the nature of love is to put itself into the place of the loved, and what we are watching is the consummation of perfect love. It is the old dilemma: "If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the mountain." God did not put Jesus in our place; Jesus put Himself there, and the forsaken cry means that He stood where we shall stand, when our eyes are opened. We can live in the dark, because we are self-blinded; Jesus could not, because He never took a drug. We can see that the death of Jesus is the consummation of His life of self-identification with us; but we shall never quite understand the Atonement until we fathom the last secret of the meaning of love, and that, perhaps, we shall not do till we look into His face.

At last the imprisoned Spirit is set free and the worst of love's agony is over. At the beginning of the Passion story a few men are whispering in a corner plotting to rid themselves of an inconvenient Stranger, and by their plotting set free a power of evil which sweeps them along helplessly before it, down into a darkness which can be felt; at its end there is only left the lifeless body of a broken-hearted Man, for our sin has run once again its accustomed course to murder and despair. So the great war began in plotting behind closed doors, then the darkness came down upon us, and the war lords were but puppets in the storm which, not knowing what they did, they had raised. When the storm at last was over it left behind it nothing but dead bodies and broken hearts. Once again, pride and greed and

jealousy, with the fear they breed, were responsible, but how great the harvest from how small a seed! But that is never the end of any tragic history, for the victorious love of God is as universal as the sin and doom of man. From this broken Body of Jesus there rises a power of light and love, which carries away those who gather round the Cross and drink the healing blood of the Crucified—a Spirit, no longer confined to a frail mortal body, to a narrow land, to three crowded years, but clothing itself with a thousand bodies, finding expression in ten thousand lives, haunting the world for ever with a redeeming power as inevitable as the doom of sin. The meaning of the Passion story in Matthew is that the world is haunted by sin and haunted by love, that in the unseen world of spirit where the history of man is made the self-sacrificing love of God and the self-destroying sin of man are always struggling for the mastery. The Resurrection means that love is winning.

The Gospel of John, and also some texts of Matthew tell us how, when Jesus was dead, a soldier pierced His side and "forthwith there came out blood and water." Matthew and John tell us that, when He died, He gave up the Spirit. 1 John 5, 8 makes the connexion of the two ideas complete; "There are three that bear witness upon the earth, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three are one." The clamouring blood crying for vengeance becomes the clamouring blood crying for mercy; the blood of Jesus stands for the consummation of man's sin and the consummation of God's love, both together,

and that is why we shall never get the blood out of the hymn book, any more than we can get it out of our New Testament, for no other symbol will suffice. Like water, it washes away the past; like blood it sends new life and power to our faltering tired hearts; and it is a Spirit, everywhere within and about us, as inevitably part of the very air we breathe, as any heritage of sin and doom can be. In the rest of the chapter we read of the rending of the Temple veil and the earthquake, with all the attendant portents which afterwards, as men came to look back upon that day in its true perspective, they came to associate with it. There is an interesting confirmation of one detail of the story in Jewish sources, for we are told that, at the Passover, forty years before the fall of the city, the closed doors of the Temple swung open of themselves; thus was the destruction of the Temple foretold. Matthew tells also of the elaborate precautions taken with the body of Jesus, to ensure that it should remain buried. The enemies of Jesus are still uneasy, and want to be certain that they have really seen the last of Him. How vain their precautions were we shall see in the next chapter.

In the 28th Chapter the Gospel runs out into calm water. Jesus is back again with His own in Galilee, with Jerusalem and the Cross behind Him, to give the signal " all clear ahead," and then to substitute for intermittent outward companionship His abiding inward presence, to leave them in order that He may be with them " all the days." Before we sun ourselves in the clear light of this happy dawn, however, we must deal with one or two of the details of this Resurrection story. In the first verse we have a difficult phrase, which seems to mean " as one week was drawing to an end, and the next was coming on." Strictly speaking, the Jewish week ended at sunset on Saturday evening. If we were compelled to take the phrase quite literally, we should have to follow Dr. Allen in his view that the earthquake and the descent of the angel are placed by our evangelist on Saturday evening. In view of Mark's phrase (16, 2) —" very early on the first day of the week," that is, " on Sunday morning "—it has been suggested by Dr. Moulton and others that we should translate " late on the night following the Sabbath towards the dawn of Sunday." In any case, the sentence is unusually awkward for Matthew, whose Hellenistic Greek is remarkably free from irregularity. We can

only suggest that the roughness perceptible here is due to the writer's anxiety to mark the sudden change from the unrelieved gloom of Saturday night to the unclouded light of Sunday morning.

It will be noticed that Mark's " young man clothed in white " has become an angel ; Luke, with his two angels, marks a further stage in the tradition. That there are far more discrepancies between the Gospels in the story of Easter morning than in their earlier records need not trouble us. If they had all been uniform, we might well be suspicious. Everybody would be tremendously excited, and all would be talking at once. The evangelists have conveyed to us in a very reassuring manner the happy incoherence of Easter Day. It has been argued with some force that vv. 9 and 10 should go out of the text, for Jesus only repeats what the angel has already said to the women, and v. 11 follows v. 8 without a hitch. It is possible that these verses are a relic of Johannine tradition which has found its way into the text of the First Gospel, but we cannot be sure ; that the passage does not run smoothly is no final argument against its authenticity.

Two other questions remain to be tackled before we attempt a general view of the book as a whole. The first is : Do we possess in vv. 9–20 the substance of the last ending of Mark's Gospel ? Vv. 11–15 clearly connect themselves with 27, 62–66, a passage which is absent from Mark 15 ; if these are taken out, we have only vv. 16–20 left. It would obviously give additional weight to the argument in favour of the genuineness of v. 19, if the triple baptismal formula

was originally found in Mark also, but we cannot be certain of this. The other and even more important question is: What about the Trinitarian doctrine suddenly sprung upon us in v. 19? Can we believe that Jesus actually said "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"?

The real difficulty here is that in the Acts, as in the Epistles of Paul, baptism is always in the name of "the Lord Jesus" or "Jesus Christ." If the Risen Lord, it is argued, had explicitly ordained the triple formula, no other phrase would have been used. But Justin, as a matter of fact, has both forms, and Eusebius quotes this very passage in two ways in different places; three times "in the name of the Father," etc., and twice "in My name." The evidence suggests that as early as the Second Century both alternatives were well known. In "Jesus as they saw Him" (p. 280) I was inclined to accept the view that "in My name" is the primitive reading, but I am not so sure now. The fact that, in 2 Cor. 13, 13, Paul slips in the Trinitarian formula so casually and by no means as if he was introducing something new, suggests that it was already in use; if it was already in use, perhaps in the liturgy of the Church, a quarter of a century after the Passion, where had it come from? Not from the First or the Second Gospel, for neither was written yet. It is at least possible that it came, both into Matthew and Paul, from some tradition of the words of Jesus.

In the last verse the evangelist summarises his Gospel for us in a great word of Jesus. His teaching, His works of mercy, the nature of His Person and His

Mission, with the consequences of His coming, to Himself and to the world, all have been surveyed in turn. One phrase is added—" all the days." It glances back to 9, 15—" days shall come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast in those days." Now those days are over and it is all clear ahead. The promise of 11, 27 is now fulfilled. " In Heaven " " all authority " was His already: now, by the Cross and Resurrection, earth and Heaven, seen and unseen, are one. No longer must Jesus live in one world and His disciples in another. In the old days they tried in vain to keep step with Him: now He is at leisure to keep step with them. What he could only do alone has been done: now " God with us " (1, 23), the Stranger in our midst, has become " I with you." There is a new intimacy, an intermingling of human and divine. It is no longer " God " and " man," but " I " and " you." In a poem called " Matthew the man " by that most modern of modernist poets, Mr. D. H. Lawrence, the following lines appear—I have taken the liberty of abbreviating them somewhat, and also of softening one or two crudities:

" So would I be lifted up, Saviour.
But put me down again in time, Master,
Before my heart stops beating, and I become what I am not.
Put me down again upon the earth, Jesus, on the brown soil
Where flowers sprout in the acrid earth, and fade into earth again . . . .
Down on the damp unceasing ground, where my feet belong
And even my heart, Lord, forever, after all uplifting . . .
I am Matthew the man; it is understood.

> And Thou art Jesus, Son of Man, drawing all men to Thee, but bound to release them when the hour strikes. . . . I have been, and I have returned . . . which is my way, being man. God may stay in mid-heaven, the Son of Man has climbed into Heaven. But I, Matthew, being a man, am a traveller back and forth; so be it."

Perhaps our evangelist would not care for these verses, for, of all the four, he most completely suppresses himself; nor will anyone suspect me of approving the suggestion that Jesus is like a Spirit who must let us go at the first sign of dawn. The very purpose of the Gospel is to shew that He will never let us go. All the same, the verses put very beautifully something that needs to be said. Church tradition was more than usually happy when Irenaeus and Victorinus (Augustine adopts a different arrangement) identified Matthew with "the man," who appears among "the four beasts" of Rev. 4, 6, 7. The First Gospel is rightly first because it is the Gospel of universal humanity, as visited and redeemed by God in the great Uplifter, Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount at every point the same note is struck: "I have come to make real men of you," and so through the rest of the Gospel in a hundred ways. "Is there a *man* amongst you?" "If a *man* had a hundred sheep," and so on. "After all uplifting" we come down to the soil of common life again, and to the sons and daughters of the soil, the labouring people, the very little brothers of Jesus (11, 27, 28; 25, 31, 40).

But it is not Matthew who is the "man," it is Jesus: and all we can say of Matthew is that he has proved himself man enough to see for himself and to portray

for us the manhood of Jesus—not perhaps as sharply as Mark has done, but in a completer and more satisfying way. When He made His greatest claim of all—that He had authority to forgive sins—it was the fact that a Man *did* this which impressed the crowd (9, 8). Jesus, not Matthew, is the traveller back and forth, the Stranger who yet was no stranger, unique not because He was not Man, but because He was the only Man. The Gospel is the story of the struggle of the great Uplifter to make of His ideal unity with us an actual union, and of His hard-won victory, by which He gained for us the power to live in two worlds as He had done, until the two worlds become two worlds no longer. Two of Charles Wesley's lines give us the meaning of the whole process.

> "He has raised our *human* nature
> To the clouds at God's right hand."

THE END

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